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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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State to establish 3 dedicated global innovation dists: CM

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah announced the establishment of three dedicated global innovation districts in Bengaluru, Mysuru, and Belagavi, aimed at attracting Global Capability Centres (GCCs) to the state. This declaration was made during the inauguration of the 27th Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS), with Australia serving as the official partner country for the event.

The new innovation districts will be part of the Knowledge, Well-being, and Innovation City (KWIN City) in Bengaluru, envisioned as a global hub for innovation and research. Siddaramaiah emphasised that Karnataka is a preferred destination for GCCs, citing the state's exceptional engineering talent and its status as home to the highest number of AI professionals globally. He revealed the recent launch of India's first dedicated GCC policy, which aims to empower these centres.

During the summit, five Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with major firms, including Microsoft, Intel, and Accenture, which will lead to the skilling of 100,000 individuals in Karnataka. The Chief Minister highlighted a cluster-based approach to foster balanced regional growth, pointing to Mangaluru's fintech leadership and Hubballi-Dharwad's advancements in electric vehicles and drones.

Furthermore, Siddaramaiah announced plans for an Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) in Kochanahalli, near Mysuru, enhancing Karnataka's role in the global semiconductor market.

With the startup ecosystem in Karnataka witnessing an 18.2 per cent growth in the past year, the Chief Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting entrepreneurship through initiatives such as the Beyond Bengaluru programme, which aims to bring technology to rural areas and improve agricultural productivity.

The BTS 2024 is set to host delegations from over 15 countries, enriching discussions and collaborative opportunities across various tech sectors. *—PTI*

Deputy CM DK Shivakumar with CM Siddaramaiah and other dignitaries during the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2024 ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Winter Session of State legislature in Belagavi from 9 Dec

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

The winter session of the Karnataka legislature is scheduled to be held for 10 days from 9- 20 December at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in the district headquarters town of Belagavi. Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot on Tuesday issued an order summoning both Karnataka Legislative Assembly and Council to meet at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha, Belagavi at 11.00 am on 9 December. Belagavi, bordering Maharashtra, has been hosting legislature sessions once a year since 2006. Suvarna Vidhana Soudha, modelled on the Vidhana Soudha, the seat of state legislature and secretariat in Bengaluru, was built as an assertion that Belagavi is an integral part of Karnataka. Maharashtra claims Belagavi and some nearby places belong to it. ***—PTI***

'Dreaded' Naxal shot dead in Udupi

UDUPI, 19 NOV

A "dreaded" naxal was shot dead by Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) near Eedu village in Karkala taluk of this district, official sources said on Tuesday. Home Minister G Parameshwara said the ANF had been looking to apprehend Vikram Gowda for about 20 years. Describing him as a "dreaded Naxal", the minister said he had escaped several times, including during "encounters" in the past. According to official sources, a group of Naxalites was spotted by the ANF during an intensive combing operation on Monday evening. On sighting the ANF party, the sources said, they opened fire. The minister said Gowda was active and was moving from state to state. The ANF was keeping a watch on his movements, but were unable to catch him. ***—PTI***

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Police to challenge Darshan's bail granted by SC

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda on Tuesday said that an appeal will be filed in the Supreme Court soon challenging the interim bail granted to Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, who is an accused in the Renukaswamy murder case. The 47-year-old had walked out of Ballari jail on 30 October after being imprisoned for more than four months, hours after the Karnataka High Court gave him relief for six weeks on medical grounds, to undergo spine surgery. "The process is on and at the earliest we will file an appeal in the Supreme Court," Dayananda said. Darshan was arrested on 11 June. His friend Pavithra Gowda and 15 others are co-accused in the case. ***—PTI***

Ukraine fires US missiles at Russia for 1st time

Attack by non-nuclear state with nuke support could lead Russia to use nuclear arms: Kremlin

MOSCOW, 19 NOV

Russia's Defence Ministry said Tuesday that Ukraine fired six US-made ATACMs missiles at Russia's Bryansk region.

In a statement carried by Russian news agencies, the ministry said the military shot down five of them and damaged one more.

The fragments fell on the territory of an unspecified military facility. The announcement comes shortly after US lifted restrictions on Ukraine using US-made missiles. Earlier on Tuesday, Ukraine's General Staff said that Ukrainian army carried out a strike on the arsenal of the 1046th Logistics Support Centre in the area of Karachev in Bryansk region of Russia.

The development comes as Russia warned of a "new round of tension" in the war earlier. Amid the escalating tensions, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a revised nuclear doctrine declaring that a conventional attack on Russia by any nation that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country. It envisages that Russia could use nuclear weapons in response to aggression against its ally Belarus. *—Agencies*

Russia claims to have shot down five of the missiles and damaged one ***PHOTO: PTI***

> **The more time he (Putin)has, the worse the conditions become. While some European leaders think about some elections, or something like this, at Ukraine's expense, Putin is focused on winning this war**
>
> —Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Ukraine President

Putin may visit India next year

New Delhi, 19 Nov

Russian President Vladimir Putin may visit India next year as part of a laid down structure between the two countries for reciprocal annual visits by their leaders, diplomatic sources said on Tuesday. Kremlin Spokesman in a video interaction with senior Indian Editors referred to the strong bilateral relationship between India and Russia, and added Putin's visit is on the cards. *—PTI*

Sweden, Finland ask citizens to prepare for war

MOSCOW, 19 NOV

Sweden on Monday started to distribute copies of a booklet advising its citizens how to prepare for war, as Nordic countries teach people how to brace for a potential Russian attack.

The 32-page brochure, which is also available in English and several other languages, advises citizens on warning systems, how to seek shelter during an air raid and even psychological and digital security. "We live in uncertain times. Armed conflicts are currently being waged in our corner of the world. Terrorism, cyberattacks, and disinformation campaigns are being used to undermine and influence us," the booklet's prologue says.

Finland's government, too, has released a digital booklet to prepare citizens for "incidents and crises," stating that the country "has always been prepared for the worst possible threat, war."

Sweden's Defence Minister Pål Jonson sounded the alarm last month, telling POLITICO that, "Russia is the principal threat to Sweden, and it constitutes a threat to the whole [NATO] alliance." According to Jonson, the risk of a Russian attack on the country "cannot be excluded."

— Courtesy, Politico

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with leaders during the G20 Summit, in Rio de Janeiro. US President Joe Biden missed the traditional group photo due to what US officials described as logistical issues ***PHOTO: PTI***

India, UK agree to relaunch FTA talks

RIO DE JANEIRO, 19 NOV

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has announced that trade talks with India will relaunch in the new year, following his bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the G20 Summit in Brazil.

Starmer and Modi met on the sidelines of the summit in Rio de Janeiro on Monday after which Downing Street said the UK will seek a new strategic partnership with India, including a trade agreement as well as deepening cooperation in areas like security, education, technology, and climate change.

Starmer's spokesperson said the UK is committed to negotiating a trade deal with India, one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

"A new trade deal with India will support jobs and prosperity in the UK – and represent a step forward in our mission to deliver growth and opportunity across our country," Starmer said in a statement released by 10 Downing Street after the bilateral meeting.

Starmer then took to X to term his meeting with Modi as "a very productive." *—PTI*

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M'rashtra & J'khand go to polls today, stakes high for key players

MUMBAI / RANCHI, 19 NOV

As Maharashtra heads to the polls on Wednesday, the stakes higher than ever for regional heavyweights including Sharad Pawar, Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, his predecessor Uddhav Thackeray, and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar as the results of this assembly election, set for 23 November, could signify a turning point for the state's political landscape. The battle is particularly fierce between the two factions of the Shiv Sena, helmed by Thackeray and Shinde, and the Pawar clan, with Sharad seeking to defeat Ajit after a significant setback in the Lok Sabha elections. The two Pawars, along with Thackeray and Shinde, are vying for legitimacy, as their parties' future hangs in the balance.

On the other hand, Jharkhand prepares for polling in 38 Assembly seats, with Chief Minister Hemant Soren and the Leader of Opposition Amar Kumar Bauri also in contention. The JMM-led alliance aims to leverage its record of welfare schemes against a strong BJP that has raised issues of Hindutva and alleged corruption in the current administration. A total of more than 4000 candidates are in the fray across both states, with polling stations opening at 7 am and closing at 5pm. Both elections encapsulate a broader narrative of popular sentiment, reflecting significant regional rifts while bearing implications for national politics. As voters cast their ballots, the results are poised to shape the future of key political figures and parties in Maharashtra and Jharkhand. *—PTI*

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Anti-smog gun ***PHOTO: PTI***

Delhi seeks Centre's nod for artificial rains

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Delhi's Environment Minister Gopal Rai has urgently called upon the central government to convene an emergency meeting to address the city's alarming pollution levels, emphasising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's moral responsibility to intervene.

During a press conference on Tuesday, Rai expressed frustration over the Centre's lack of response to repeated requests for authorisation of artificial rain to combat the severe smog enveloping the national capital.

With Delhi currently under Stage IV restrictions of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), Rai highlighted the measures being taken to mitigate vehicular and industrial pollution, including limits on private vehicles and trucks entering the city. "We are consulting with specialists to implement strategies that could potentially include artificial rain as a solution to clear the air," he stated. Rai condemned the Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav's inaction over the urgent situation and expressed that if the central government fails to act, Yadav should consider resigning. He is drafting yet another letter, urging Yadav to organise the emergency meeting with experts from IIT Kanpur, who have conducted pivotal research on artificial rain. *—PTI*

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NDA resolves to combat Kuki militants

IMPHAL, 19 NOV

The BJP-led NDA government in Manipur has passed resolution demanding a 'mass operation' against the Kuki militants held responsible for the brutal killings of three women and three children in Jiribam district.

The resolution calls for the Kuki militants to be officially declared an "unlawful organisation" within the same timeframe.

The Assembly also requested the Central government to review the enforcement of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), in line with regulations set forth on 14 November. The MLAs expressed their commitment to take further action if the resolutions are not executed within the stipulated period, pledging to consult with the populace of Manipur regarding future steps. *—PTI*

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14-YR GSAT-N2 MISSION

SpaceX launches ISRO satellite

PHOTO: PTI

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

India's latest communication satellite, GSAT-N2, was successfully launched by SpaceX, the aerospace company founded by billionaire Elon Musk. The satellite was launched from Cape Canaveral, USA, on 19 November, 2024, according to NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), ISRO's commercial arm.

The GSAT-N2, weighing 4,700 kg, has been successfully injected into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

NSIL confirmed that the Indian Space Research Organisation's Master Control Facility (MCF) has assumed control of the satellite, which is currently reported to be in good health based on preliminary data. The satellite has a mission life of 14 years, with 32 user beams – eight narrow spot beams focused on the Northeast region and 24 wide spot beams covering the rest of India.

The payload includes three parabolic 2.5-metre deployable reflectors, using a single feed per beam configuration, to generate 32 spot beams over the Indian territory. *—PTI*

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WOMAN DIES IN EV SHOWROOM FIRE

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

A 20-year-old woman was charred to death after a fire broke out at an electric vehicle showroom near Navrang Bar Junction on Dr Rajkumar Road in City on Tuesday evening.

The victim, Priya, worked as a cashier at 'My EV Store' electric bike showroom. She died from asphyxiation and severe burn injuries, a fire official said. Around 45 electric two-wheelers in the showroom were destroyed in the blaze.

"The cause of the fire is still under investigation; however, the flames have been extinguished," an officer attached to Rajajinagar police station told **Salar News**. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: PTI

B'luru-Male Indigo flight faces glitch; diverted to Kochi

KOCHI, 19 NOV

An IndiGo plane from Bengaluru to Male was diverted to Kochi on Tuesday afternoon due to a technical issue, according to sources. The flight to the capital of Maldives was being operated with an A321 aircraft, information available on the flight tracking website Flightradar24.com showed. The sources said the aircraft faced a technical issue, following which it was diverted to the Kochi airport and landed safely there at around 2.20pm. The number of passengers onboard the plane could not be immediately ascertained. A statement from IndiGo is awaited. *—PTI*

Online gambling racket busted in City

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

Parappana Agrahara police nabbed six accused involved in running an online gambling and betting racket in the City, on Tuesday. According to the police, the gang had been operating from an apartment flat near Electronic City- Phase 2 where they used to host online gambling games and take bets from people for matches of different sports such as cricket and Kabaddi. Based on credible information, a team raided the place and nabbed six accused involved while two others managed to escape from the place. The police have seized 41 mobile phones, five laptops, three wifi routers from the apartment flat, the police said. Following preliminary investigation, the accused have been released on conditional bail. The probe is still underway. *—Salar News*

2 held for stealing med equipment from hospital

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

A woman and her friend were arrested for allegedly stealing two probe devices used in ultrasound scanning machines from a private hospital in Kumaraswamy Layout in City. According to police, a housekeeping staff member of the hospital found the probes missing from Radiology Department and informed the authorities. Following the complaint, the CCTV footage was collected and based on the visuals, a woman was detained for inquiry. "The woman used to work for another private hospital in Cunningham Road. Upon interrogation, she revealed that she had handed over the stolen equipment to her male friend in Laggere," police told Salar News. KS Layout police recovered two probe devices from the accused. *—Salar News*

Shiva Lingas stolen from temple in Chintamani

CHINTAMANI, 19 NOV

Two Shiva Lingas were stolen from Tapateswara temple at Kundanahalli village in Chintamani taluk. The theft was discovered by the temple priest on Tuesday morning when he arrived to perform pooja after celebrating Karthika Somavara the previous day. Sudarshan Yadav, Tahsildar of Chintamani, confirmed that the temple lacks a proper approach road but is visited by devotees during special pooja ceremonies. The temple, believed to be ancient, holds significant religious value, with villagers regarding the Lingas as powerful. Police suspect that miscreants may have stolen the idols to use them for their own rituals. The stone Lingas, each around two feet tall, were taken after the sanctum sanctorum was dug up. Revenue authorities and local police have been informed, and a case is under investigation. *—Salar News*

'Dreaded' Naxal shot dead in Udupi

3 others escape, ANF continues combing ops

UDUPI, 19 NOV

A "dreaded" Naxal was shot dead by Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) near Eedu village in Karkala taluk of this district, official sources said on Tuesday.

Home Minister G Parameshwara said the ANF had been looking to apprehend Vikram Gowda for about 20 years.

Describing him as a "dreaded Naxal", the minister said he had escaped several times, including during "encounters" in the past.

" Gowda had been leading the Naxalite operations in south India for over two decades. He had taken shelter in Kerala and Tamil Nadu and had visited Kodagu (in Karnataka) many times," an official said.

Parameshwara told reporters: "All of a sudden they (Gowda and associates) have fired on the police. Two or three others who were with him have escaped, ANF police have continued the combing operation."

Vikram Gowda PHOTO: PTI

- Describing him as a "dreaded Naxal", Home Minister G Parameshwara said he had escaped several times, including during 'encounters' in the past

He said Gowda was active and was moving from state to state. The ANF was keeping a watch on his movements, but were unable to catch him. "Now based on information, the encounter has happened..." There was a feeling that Naxal activities in the state had ended, he said.

"Last week two people (Naxals) - Raju and Latha - were sighted. As they had escaped, combing operations to nab them were on for about a week now. All of a sudden, officials got information about him (Gowda) and as they were looking for him, and he fired at them."

Asked whether an encounter was necessary, he said: "He (Gowda) has fired at the police as soon as he saw them, so they had to retaliate. This is the first basic information that I have got."

Efforts are on to bring those involved in Naxal activities to the mainstream, Parameshwara said. *—PTI*

Oppn trying hard to nitpick: Shivakumar

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

Stating that Congress party and its schemes have always been pro-poor, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Tuesday accused Opposition of nitpicking. "It was Congress party and not BJP which gave pro-poor schemes such as ration cards, pension, food grains, sites under Ashraya scheme and title to the tiller. BJP is trying to find stones in the curd," he said at the KPCC office here.

About Opposition's criticism of BPL card cancellations, he said, "Some government employees, income taxpayers and economically well-off people are holding BPL cards. We are only trying to review such cases. The Centre has set guidelines to determine poverty and we will decide based on that. In case BPL cards have been cancelled wrongly, it will be restored. This has been decided by the Chief Minister." *—Salar News*

MUDA SCAM

Lokayukta questions MUDA ex-commissioner

MYSURU, 19 NOV

Former Commissioner of Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) DB Natesh was questioned by Lokayukta police here on Tuesday, in connection with the alleged irregularities in allotment of sites to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi, officials said.

He appeared before the Lokayukta police in response to a notice served on him, they said. "...investigation is underway. We have to provide necessary documents and information to the investigating agency which will find the truth," Natesh told reporters.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is facing allegations of illegalities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi BM by the MUDA. Siddaramaiah, his wife Parvathi, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others have been named in the FIR registered by the Mysuru Lokayukta police on 27 September, following the directions of a special court.

DB Natesh PHOTO: PTI

Siddaramaiah was served a summon for questioning, and he appeared before the Lokayukta police in Mysuru on 6 November.

The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout. Under the controversial scheme, MUDA allotted 50 per cent of developed land to the land losers in lieu of undeveloped land acquired from them for developing residential layouts. *—PTI*

Don't show step-motherly treatment: Chaluvaraya to PM on fund allocation

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

Karnataka Agriculture Minister N Chaluvaraya Swamy on Tuesday lashed out at the central government for the reduced fund allocation to the State and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah of showing "step-motherly treatment" towards Congress-ruled state.

"Modi or Amit Shah should not show such step-motherly treatment and attack Karnataka," said Swamy, adding that representatives from Karnataka in the centre including former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy never spoke a word for the betterment of farmers in the state.

"We have representatives from Karnataka in the centre including HD Kumaraswamy who never speak a word for the betterment of the farmers in Karnataka. They cut down the allocations and funds which are supposed to be for the farmers, central government is disastrous for the farmers. They are becoming friendly to the corporate sectors. Our MPs and Ministers including HD Kumarswamy must apologise to the state as we fought for the tax share and the Supreme Court slammed the central government," Karnataka Agriculture Minister Chaluvaraya Swamy.

Farmers don't belong to one caste of community, they must be considered and their issues have to be addressed, he said, adding that if the central government continues to do so, they will have to take different ways to oppose this and fight against such step-motherly treatment or neglect.

He further accused Union government of curbing fund allocations for pro-poor schemes. *—ANI*

FREE 2ND OPINION

State launches 24/7 joint surgery helpline

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

The Karnataka government on Tuesday launched a dedicated, round-the-clock helpline for patients seeking a free second opinion on complex elective joint surgeries, aimed at helping them make informed decisions.

The new helpline service, 18004258330, which operates 24/7 under the Suvarna Arogya Suraksha Trust for Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana-Chief Minister's Arogya Karnataka (AB-PMJAY-CM's-ArK), will assist individuals seeking expert advice on joint replacement surgeries in the State.

With the increasing prevalence of arthritis, age-related joint degeneration, and injuries, joint replacement surgeries such as total knee and hip replacements are on the rise. Patients often face dilemmas in deciding on the best available treatment or surgery.

Launching the helpline, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao emphasised that this initiative reflects the government's commitment to improving healthcare access in Karnataka, ensuring every citizen receives comprehensive, personalised medical advice for managing joint-related issues.

PHOTO: UNSPLASH

Health officials stated that the helpline aims to provide evidence-based guidance to patients with knee and hip problems, helping them make well-informed decisions about the most appropriate treatment options.

A unique feature of the helpline is its ability to empower the general public with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about their health, officials said. *—PTI*

CCB ARRESTS 6 IN FAKE ESI CARD RACKET

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

Central Crime Branch (CCB) sleuths busted a racket that floated fake companies to create health cards for availing benefits of government schemes and arrested five people, including two women, City Police Commissioner B Dayananda said on Tuesday.

Based on a tip-off, Organised Crime Wing initiated a probe and found the security guard of ESI (Employees State Insurance) Hospital situated in Rajajinagar, along with four of his associates, running the racket for the last two years. The accused floated four companies on paper and enrolled hundreds of people as its employees to get them e-pehchan cards offered by the government for free medical treatment, according to the probe. The accused charged Rs 20,000 from the people in advance to get them free healthcare, police said.

"Police have seized Rs 4.6 lakh in cash, forged documents, ESI cards, fake seals belonging to companies and hospitals, four laptops and five phones from the accused," police said. *—Salar News*

FINANCIAL DISPUTE

TV actor held for firing at director

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

Kannada television and film actor Thandav Ram was arrested after he allegedly fired at director Bharath Navunda over a financial dispute stemming from their unfinished project titled Devanampriya.

The firing occurred at the residence of a producer near Subbanna Garden here around 6.30pm on Monday.

Ram and Navunda met at an event two years ago where the director expressed his interest in casting the actor for his upcoming television serial named Devanampriya, according to statements from both the accused and the complainant.

As they could not get any producers, Ram loaned Navunda Rs 6 lakh to start the project. However, the project could not be launched even after two years which angered Ram and he began demanding the director to return his payment. As the financial dispute between the actor and the director was becoming serious, a common friend, who is also a producer, arranged a meeting between them at his house near Subbanna Garden on Monday evening.

The argument between them turned violent after Ram allegedly pulled out a licensed gun and threatened Navunda, sources said. The actor fired a shot which fortunately missed Navunda and struck a wall.

Director Navunda contacted Chandra Layout police, who arrested Ram. A case of attempt to murder has been registered.

Thandav Ram PHOTO: FB

Thandav Ram, also known as Thandaveshwar, gained popularity for his roles in popular Kannada television serials such as Jodi Hakki and Bhoomige Banda Bhagavantha. *—Salar News*

FLIGHT CLUB

A man in a jet suit stole the show while welcoming Chief Minister Siddaramaiah to the inauguration of the three-day Bengaluru Tech Summit, at Palace Grounds in Bengaluru, on Tuesday. The suit is by UK-based firm Gravity Industries PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

27 Sabarimala devotees injured in bus accident

WAYANAD, 19 NOV

Twenty seven passengers sustained injuries after a bus carrying Lord Ayyappa devotees from Sabarimala Temple overturned near Thirunelli in Wayanad in Kerala early in the morning on Tuesday, police said.

According to police, the bus, which was carrying 45 people, including two children was on is way back to Hunsur in Mysuru after their visit to the Sabarimala temple when it met with the accident. The mishap took place around 6 am.

The injured were immediately admitted to Mananthavady Medical College in Wayanad and authorities stated that the condition of the injured passengers was not serious.

The temple opened its doors on 15 November to mark the start of the annual Mandala-Makaravilakku festival, marking the beginning of the annual pilgrimage season.

Meanwhile, Kerala's Sabarimala temple welcomed devotees on Friday afternoon, marking the start of the annual Mandalam-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season.

The outgoing Melsanthi (head priest) PN Mahesh Namboothiri opened temple's sanctum sanctorum. *—ANI*

6 B'deshi nationals held in Chitradurga

CHITRADURGA, 19 NOV

Six Bangladeshi nationals were arrested for allegedly staying illegally in Chitradurga, police said on Tuesday.

The arrested are Shek Saifur Rohaman, Muhammed Suman Husen Ali, Majharul, Azizul Shaik, Muhammed SakibSikdar and Sanowar Hossain.

The arrests were made on Monday during a routine patrol near garment factories on Holalkere Road, where the men were found behaving suspiciously. Upon interrogation, it was revealed that they were Bangladeshi nationals who had entered India illegally several years ago intending to settle here.

The men initially entered India through West Bengal, where they forged Aadhaar cards and Voter ID cards, besides other documents in Kolkata. They were working in states across India to earn a living, according to a police official.

The men had been residing illegally in Chitradurga city for some time, police said.

Legal proceedings have been initiated against them, and documents including Aadhaar cards, Voter ID cards, labour cards, bank passbooks, PAN cards, and others have been seized, they added. *—ANI*

Kolar father sets up 'Pink Rooms' to support girls during menstruation

KOLAR, 19 NOV

Inspired by a deeply personal experience, Anthony Sajeeth, an IT employee from Bengaluru, has launched an initiative to create safe and supportive spaces for girls experiencing menstruation in rural Kolar district. His initiative, called 'The Pink Room,' aims to provide comfort and privacy for schoolgirls during their menstrual cycle.

The idea stemmed from an incident in 2010, when Sajeeth's daughter experienced her first menstruation while at school. Unprepared and distressed, she had no private space to manage the situation, leaving her embarrassed and uncomfortable.

In the past year, he has successfully established three 'Pink Rooms' in government schools across Kolar. The first was opened at the Government School in Madanahalli Cross, followed by another in Kurugal village, and a third in Kyalanoor, where approximately 300 girls are enrolled. These rooms are equipped with facilities like attached toilets, a changing room, a pad vending machine, and an incinerator for safe disposal of used pads. The rooms also feature cots and study tables to ensure a comfortable environment.

Pink rooms are equipped with facilities like attached toilets, a changing room, a pad vending machine, and an incinerator for safe disposal of used pads PHOTO: SALAR

Sajeeth, who funded the project personally, is now working to expand the initiative with the help of local government representatives, corporate sponsors, and CSR support. His goal is to ensure that girls in rural areas have the necessary resources to manage menstruation with dignity and ease. *—Salar News*

M'rashtra BJP MLA's sister injured in knife attack

AMRAVATI, 19 NOV

Maharashtra BJP MLA and assembly poll candidate Pratap Adsad's sister was injured when two people allegedly attacked her with a knife in Amravati district, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place at around 8 pm on Monday, they said. Adsad is the legislator from Dhamangaon Railway constituency and has been re-nominated from the seat by the BJP. Monday was the last day of campaigning for the state assembly polls scheduled on 20 November. Adsad's sister Archana Rothe was travelling in a car. When the vehicle stopped at Satefal Fata, two persons approached from behind and attacked her with a knife, said Amravati Rural Superintendent of Police Vishal Anand. She suffered three wounds on her left arm, he said —*PTI*

VBA candidate injured in stone pelting incident

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINGAR, 19 NOV

A candidate of the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi was injured after unidentified persons pelted stones on his car in Maharashtra's Hingoli district in the wee hours of Tuesday, police said. The attack occurred around 1.30am in the Selsura Pati locality on Hingoli-Kalamnuri Road, an official said. He said five unidentified persons in a four-wheeler hurled stones at VBA candidate Dilip Maske's car. The official said Maske suffered a head injury and was taken to Nanded for further treatment. Maske will be contesting the 20 November state polls from the Kalamnuri assembly constituency. A case has been registered against five unidentified persons in Kalamnuri police station, police said —*PTI*

Siddique's murder: Shooter's custody extended till 23 Nov

MUMBAI, 19 NOV

A Mumbai court extended Shivkumar Gautam's police custody until 23 November in connection with the NCP leader Baba Siddique's murder case. Police have requested further remand for Gautam, who is not at all cooperating with the probe and the weapon used in the shooting remains unrecovered. The four others, Anurag Kashyap, Gyan Prakash Tripathi, Akash Srivastava and Akhilendra Pratap Singh, were arrested for allegedly sheltering Gautam and helping him flee to Nepal. All accused were presented before Vinod Patil, who extended Gautam's police custody until 23 November, while the other accused were sent to 14 day judicial custody. The court extended Gautam's custody until 23 November after he was shot dead by three assailants outside his son's office on 12 October. —*PTI*

CPI(M) scaring voters in Palakkad: Congress

PALAKKAD, 19 NOV

The Congress and BJP on Tuesday contended that the ruling CPI(M)'s reported remarks about stopping fake voters from entering polling stations during the voting for the Palakkad assembly seat were aimed at deterring electors and would amount to taking the law into its own hands. The bypoll will be held on 20 November. Visiting homes during the silent campaign, Congress-led UDF candidate Rahul Mamkootathil asked when the election officials were officers of the government, how the names of fake voters can appear on the electoral roll. Rahul, the state president of the Youth Congress, said that even the UDF was opposed to fake voters, but that issue should not be used to intimidate real electors from voting. BJP's C Krishnakumar, contended that such statements by the CPI(M) revealed the Left party's tendency to take law into its own hands.—*PTI*

Manipur govt relieves cop after Jiribam row

Govt forms two-member inquiry committee to probe causes that led to firing on Sunday

People take part in a protest march against the reimposition of AFSPA in parts of Manipur, in Imphal, on Tuesday. The procession was, however, stopped by the police at Keisampat junction as it defied curfew orders ***PHOTO: PTI***

IMPHAL, 19 NOV

The Manipur government has "relieved" senior SP (Combat) Nectar Sanjenbam of his duties after a probe was conducted into the Jiribam firing incident which left one person dead and another injured, according to a Home Department order.

The government has constituted a two-member inquiry committee to investigate the causes that led to the firing on Sunday night.

The order issued by the Home Department on Monday said that "the service of Col (Retd) Nectar Sanjenbam as senior SP (Combat) shall be discontinued".

A protester was killed and another was injured in the firing incident during a clash between security forces and a mob that was vandalising properties in Babupara areas of Jiribam on Sunday night.

Police could not confirm who opened fire, while eyewitnesses claimed the firing came from the direction of the security forces.

The committee will be led by IGP (Intelligence) K Kabib as its chairman with Ningsen Worngam DIG (Range III) as the member, according to the order.

The panel will inquire into the cause and circumstances leading to the firing incident and find out if there was any foul play on the part of any person including public authority, it said.

The committee was asked to submit its findings within 30 days. —*PTI*

KHARGE WRITES TO MURMU ON MANIPUR SITUATION

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge has written to President Droupadi Murmu over the deteriorating situation in Manipur and has urged her immediate intervention to ensure that people of the state live peacefully in their homes with dignity.

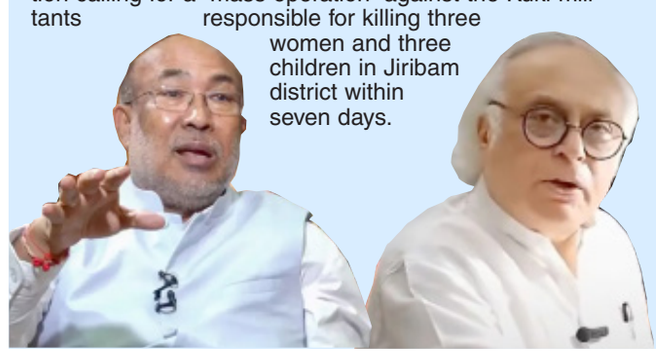
In his two-page letter to the President, Kharge highlighted the "failure" of the Manipur government and the Centre in ensuring law and order and the safety of people in Manipur for the last 18 months.

He said the violence in Manipur has taken more than 300 human lives, including women, children and even small babies.

He said the "deteriorating law and order in Manipur has internally displaced nearly a lakh of human population rendering them homeless and forcing them to live in different relief camps". The agony of the people continues unabated, he said. —*PTI*

Cong mocks Biren & Shah as NDA MLAs 'skip' Manipur meeting

Congress on Tuesday took a swipe at BJP over some MLAs of the ruling NDA skipping a meeting called by Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh, saying the writing on the wall is clear and asked whether Home Minister Amit Shah is reading it. Congress General Secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh also asked how long will the "excruciating agony" of the people of Manipur continue like this.Ramesh along with Manipur Congress chief K Meghachandra Singh, AICC in-charge of state Girish Chodankar, Inner Manipur MP A Bimol Akoijam and former Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Nabam Tuki met Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, apprising him of the situation in the violence-hit state and deliberated on ways to bring peace in the state. Later, in a post, Ramesh said, "Now we gather that the signatures of 3 MLAs who were supposedly present have been forged.His remarks come a day after a meeting of MLAs of the ruling BJP-led NDA in Manipur adopted a resolution calling for a "mass operation" against the Kuki militants responsible for killing three women and three children in Jiribam district within seven days.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni at G20 summit in Brazil on Tuesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

India, Italy unveil five-year strategic action plan at G20

RIO DE JANEIRO, 19 NOV

India and Italy unveiled an ambitious five-year strategic action plan outlining specific initiatives in key sectors of defence, trade, clean energy and connectivity following extensive talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni.

The action plan 2025-29 identified 10 specific pillars for advancing bilateral engagement that included economic cooperation and investments, energy transition, space, defence, security, migration and mobility, people-to-people exchanges.

In the talks held on the sidelines of the G20 summit on late Monday, Modi and Meloni also resolved to work together on multilateral and global platforms for upholding shared values of democracy, rule of law and sustainable development, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). It was the fifth meeting between the two prime ministers in the last two years. The two countries will pursue collaborations, programmes and initiatives in areas of trade, investment, science and technology, new and emerging technologies, clean energy, space, defence, connectivity and people-to-people linkages under the joint action plan, it said.

Modi and Meloni also agreed to continue working together for the implementation of plurilateral strategic initiatives, including the Global Biofuels Alliance and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, of which they are founding members. —*PTI*

Case against 4 for murder bid against Anil Deshmukh

NAGPUR, 19 NOV

Police have registered a case against four unidentified persons on charges of attempt to murder after NCP (SP) leader and former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh was seriously injured in stone pelting at his car in Nagpur, officials said on Tuesday.

The incident took place at around 8 pm on Monday and Deshmukh was later admitted to a private hospital in Nagpur.

State NCP (SP) spokesperson Pravin Kunte claimed there was a "conspiracy" against Deshmukh, who received injuries on his head and shoulder, and blamed the ruling BJP for the incident.

Deshmukh was returning to Katol after attending a meeting in Narkhed village. Some unidentified persons threw stones at his car near Belphata on Jalalkheda Road near Katol in Nagpur district.

The former minister, who received injuries during the attack, was immediately rushed to the Katol Civil Hospital, police said.

He was later admitted to a private hospital here.

Nagpur Rural Superintendent of Police (SP) Harssh Poddar on Tuesday said they have taken a serious cognisance of the incident and registered a case against four unidentified persons on charges of attempt to murder.

A forensic team has visited the incident spot to collect technical evidence, he said. —*PTI*

POLL HEAT ON

BJP spent Rs 500 crore to incite hatred, says J'khand CM Soren

BJP video for Jharkhand polls shows Muslim immigrants barging into and taking over a local person's home. Following complaints from Congress and JMM against the "misleading and malicious" video, the Election Commission directed BJP to take down the post ***PHOTO: SCREENGRAB***

RANCHI, 19 NOV

A day after Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren charged the BJP with "launching a whisper campaign to influence voters", he hit out at the saffron camp again on Tuesday, alleging that the opposition party in the state spent over Rs 500 crore in "malicious campaigns" against him.

Soren also accused the BJP of being an "expert in fulfilling political ambitions by inciting hatred among people".

He claimed that Jharkhand's culture does not allow such "malicious campaigns".

"It is the easiest thing for leaders to fulfil their political ambitions by inciting hateful feelings in you. This campaign is the easiest and the BJP is an expert in it. But I am from Jharkhand - our culture doesn't allow this and I will never do this," Soren claimed in a post on X.

"According to one estimate, the BJP has spent more than Rs 500 crore on shadow, whisper and hate campaigns against me," the JMM leader alleged. Soren also accused the BJP of bringing in people from Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Bengal to campaign against him and allegedly instil fear among voters on roads and intersections during the election period. —*PTI*

Flying squad raids Yugendra's dad's auto outlet

Pune, 18 Nov

Ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly elections, a poll flying squad has conducted a search at an automobiles showroom belonging to NCP (SP) candidate Yugendra Pawar's father in Baramati town, officials said on Tuesday. The 'Sharayu Motors' outlet of Yugendra Pawar's father Shrinivas Pawar was searched late Monday night but nothing suspicious was found, they said. Yugendra Pawar, candidate of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP), is taking on his uncle and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar of the NCP from Baramati seat in Pune. Pune Collector Suhas Divase confirmed that following a complaint, a flying squad of the Election Commission visited the showroom and conducted the search, but did not find anything suspicious.

BYELECTIONS IN 4 STATES, 15 SEATS TODAY

LUCKNOW/ CHANDIGARH, 19 NOV

Bypolls in 15 Assembly seats spread across Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Kerala and Uttarakhand will be held on Wednesday.

Votes will be counted on 23 November. The results of the bypolls, however, will not have any direct impact on the respective legislative assemblies.

In Uttar Pradesh, polling will be held in Katehari, Karhal, Meerapur, Ghaziabad, Majhawan, Sisamau, Khair, Phulpur and Kundarki. Ninety candidates are in the fray in these seats with the maximum of 14 in Ghaziabad.

This will be the first electoral test of the INDIA bloc as well as the NDA in the politically-crucial state after the Lok Sabha elections.

Bypolls will also be held in four assembly seats Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak, Chabbewal (SC) and Barnala in Punjab.The bypolls were necessitated after MLAs representing them were elected to the Lok Sabha. Of the four assembly segments, Gidderbaha, Dera Baba Nanak and Chabbewal were earlier held by the Congress, and the Barnala seat by the AAP. Forty-five candidates, including three women, are in the fray. A total of 6.96 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise.

Polling will also be held for the Palakkad seat in Kerala and Kedarnath in Uttarakhand.

The bypoll in Palakkad was necessitated after the Congress MLA of the constituency, Shafi Parambil, got elected to the Lok Sabha from the Vadakara constituency.

The Kedarnath seat fell vacant after the death of sitting BJP MLA Shailarani Rawat in July. Both the candidates, BJP's Asha Nautiyal and Manoj Rawat of Congress, have represented the Kedarnath assembly seat in the past. —*PTI*

Ruling, Oppn shutdowns near total in Wayanad

WAYANAD, 19 NOV

The separate dawn-to-dusk shutdowns called by the ruling LDF and opposition UDF in the disaster-hit Wayanad district of Kerala on Tuesday saw shops largely remaining closed and vehicles blocked in many areas.

The CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-headed UDF announced hartals separately to protest against the lack of Central assistance for the landslide victims in the hill-district even months after the disaster.

Both ruling and Opposition parties wanted the BJP-led union government to declare the landslide calamity as a national disaster and provide required assistance for the relief and rehabilitation of the survivors at the earliest.

While the LDF alleged that the denying of Central assistance to Wayanad was due to political reasons and the union government was holding grudges towards the state, the UDF criticised the Left government in the state for the continuing plight of the landslide survivors.

In many places, those supporting the hartal blocked vehicles, causing traffic snarls since morning. The state-run KSRTC buses could be seen operating in several areas with police escorts. Though comparatively less in number, private vehicles were also plying without any hurdles.

- The state, witnessed political row following the Centre's letter stating that under the existing guidelines there is no provision to declare any calamity a 'national disaster"

In Lakdi, there was a minor argument between UDF workers and police in connection with the blocking of vehicles.

Both LDF and UDF will carry out protest marches in major centres of the district later in the day, sources said.

The state, last week, witnessed an intense political row following the Centre's recent letter to the state government stating that under the existing guidelines of SDRF and NDRF, there is no provision to declare any calamity a 'national disaster".

The disaster, which struck on 30 July, devastated large parts of three villages --Punchirimattam, Chooralmala, and Mundakkai--along with sections of Attamala in Wayanad.

As per the government, the deadly disaster claimed 231 lives, while 47 people are still missing. —*PTI*

'LINGUISTIC TYRANNY'

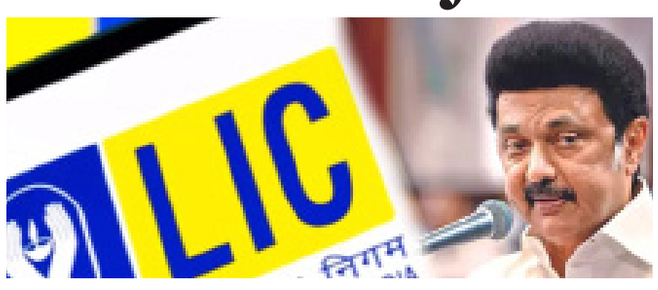
Stalin condemns LIC for 'Hindi bias'

CHENNAI, 19 NOV

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Tuesday took strong exception to the use of Hindi language on the website of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India, and said that the website has been reduced to a propaganda tool for imposing Hindi. LIC has responded, calling it a technical issue.

Posting a screenshot of the LIC of India webpage containing Hindi, the chief minister said in a post on social media platform 'X': "the LIC website has been reduced to a propaganda tool for Hindi imposition. Even the option to select English is displayed in Hindi!"

This, he claimed, was nothing but cultural and language imposition by force, trampling on India's diversity.



Tamil Nadu CM argued that the LIC's customer base should be drawn from diverse languages in India ***PHOTO: PTI***

The Indian National Congress (LIC) has been accused of linguistic tyranny, with the chief minister calling for an immediate rollback of the Hindi imposition. BJP's ally and PMK founder Dr S Ramadoss criticized the move as a "blatant imposition" of Hindi on non-Hindi-speaking people. He argued that the LIC's customer base should be drawn from diverse languages in India. Dr Ramadoss called for the LIC's home page to be changed to English and a Tamil version website to be started. AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami criticized the LIC for making the website all Hindi, stating that the language change option is currently in Hindi and is not accessible.

Former Chief Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, has called for the Centre to change the default language of the website to English and refrain from further action to push Hindi into the country's diverse culture and politics. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

AR Rahman's wife Saira announces separation

MUMBAI, 19 NOV

After nearly three decades of marriage, renowned composer AR Rahman and his wife, Saira Banu, have decided to separate. In a statement, Saira's lawyer said, "After many years of marriage, Mrs. Saira has made the difficult decision to separate from her husband Mr AR Rahman. This decision comes after significant emotional strain in their relationship." The couple, married since 1995, has three children: daughters Khatija and Rahima, and son Ameen. They have requested privacy as they navigate this personal transition. *—Agencies*

Comedian Yash booked for abusive remarks at show

DURG, 19 NOV

Police in Chhattisgarh's Durg district have registered a First Information Report (FIR) against stand-up comedian Yash Rathi for allegedly using objectionable language during a performance at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhilai. The incident occurred on 15 November, during an event attended by students, parents, and staff. Clips of Rathi's performance have since gone viral on social media, prompting complaints from various organisations, including the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) and the National Students' Union of India, as well as a formal complaint from IIT management. Durg Superintendent of Police Jitendra Shukla confirmed that Rathi is facing charges under Section 296. Following the controversy, IIT Bhilai's Director Rajiv Prakash stated that the institute will no longer host stand-up comedy shows.. *—PTI*

Odisha: 26 black stone quarries to halt ops over safety

JAJPUR, 19 NOV

The officials have ordered the cessation of operations at 26 black stone quarries in Jajpur district, Odisha, due to serious safety violations. The quarries, situated in Bajabati, Rahadpur, Dankari, Baramana, and the Bichhakhandi Hills in Dharmasala, were found to have contravened safety norms following an inquiry by the Directorate General of Mines Safety. This investigation, initiated in September after complaints regarding safety lapses, revealed significant breaches of regulations. Jay Prakash Nayak, Deputy Director of Mines for the Jajpur Circle, confirmed that, based on the inquiry findings, the quarry lessees have been instructed to suspend all mining and related activities. Local authorities, including the police, have also been alerted. *—PTI*

3 forest officials suspended over elephant's death

BHUBANESWAR, 19 NOV

Three forest personnel in Odisha's Sambalpur district have been suspended following the electrocution of three elephants, officials announced on Tuesday. The incident, which occurred in the early hours of Monday, involved two female elephants and a calf that came into contact with live wires allegedly set up by poachers in the Naktideul range of the Rairakhol forest division. In addition to the suspensions, the Forest Department has recommended action against two senior officers; one has been asked to provide an explanation for his lack of accountability. Two suspected poachers have been detained, while authorities continue their search for two additional suspects. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) Susanta Nanda indicated that the deaths were due to negligence and a lack of vigilance. *—PTI*

Shrouded in thick smog, Delhi struggles to breathe

Delhi faces severe pollution crisis with AQI at 488

An anti-smog gun sprays mist to mitigate smoggy conditions, in New Delhi, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Delhi continues to grapple with an alarming thick grey haze, marking the third consecutive day of severe pollution. The Air Quality Index (AQI) surged to a staggering 488, classified within the 'severe plus' category. Calm winds and falling temperatures are hindering the dispersion of pollutants, with cold air trapping dust and smoke from stubble burning in neighbouring regions.

Monday night saw the city experience its coldest temperatures of the season, plummeting to 12.3 degrees Celsius from the previous night's 16.2 degrees, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). By 9 am on Tuesday, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) reported an AQI of 488, with an overwhelming 31 out of 32 monitoring stations recording figures exceeding 480. Two stations, Alipur and Sonia Vihar, even maxed out at 500.

The pollution levels on Monday marked the city's second-worst air quality in six years, reaching an AQI of 494. In response to these alarming readings, officials implemented stricter pollution control measures under Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) from Monday morning. These measures encompass a ban on the entry of trucks carrying non-essential goods, halting construction and demolition activities, and closing schools.

Experts warn that without an increase in wind speed, significant improvement in air quality remains unlikely over the next few days. However, rain is anticipated later this week, which could potentially alleviate pollution levels. On Tuesday morning, dense fog reduced visibility to a mere 400 metres, with humidity recorded at 89 per cent. The maximum temperature is predicted to reach 24 degrees Celsius. *—PTI*

SC advocates virtual hearings amid pollution

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

In response to the escalating pollution crisis in the National Capital Region, Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna announced on Tuesday that judges are encouraged to facilitate virtual hearings wherever feasible.

This directive comes as lawyers, including Supreme Court Bar Association president Kapil Sibal, voiced urgent concerns about deteriorating air quality, now classified as 'severe plus'.

While the Chief Justice affirmed the option for legal representatives to appear online, he declined requests for the court to hold fully virtual sessions. He stated, "We will leave it to the lawyers concerned," further emphasising that the choice to attend virtually remains open to them.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and other legal professionals stressed the necessity for a broader message to be sent to lower courts regarding the importance of virtual hearings during this environmental emergency. *—PTI*

'IMPORTANT CONSENSUS'

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in a meeting with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of G20 Summit PHOTO: PTI

India, China discuss next step after disengagement

NEW DELHI / RIO DE JANEIRO, 19 NOV

Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held talks with his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Rio de Janeiro, marking the first high-level engagement between the two nations since their militaries disengaged from friction points in Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh.

Both ministers acknowledged the progress made in the recent disengagement, which followed extensive negotiations to address the longstanding border dispute. Jaishankar noted on 'X' that they also discussed the forthcoming steps for improving bilateral ties and exchanged views on global developments. With both sides resuming patrolling in Demchok and Depsang after a hiatus of four-and-a-half years, Jaishankar expressed cautious optimism about the potential for stronger relations following the latest disengagement.

Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi indicated that the Indian military is working to restore trust, emphasising that mutual reassurance from both sides is essential.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping recently convened in Kazan, where they supported the disengagement agreement and instructed the revival of several bilateral dialogue mechanisms. Modi highlighted the need for mutual trust and sensitivity to ensure peace in the disputed border areas, reiterating that normalising ties hinges on maintaining calm along the border. The eastern Ladakh standoff initially erupted in May 2020 following a violent clash at Pangong Lake. *—PTI*

COPS DEPLOYED

2 groups clash in MP over platform dispute

BURHANPUR, 19 NOV

Tensions escalated in Biroda village, Burhanpur district, Madhya Pradesh, on Monday evening as two groups clashed over a long-standing dispute regarding a local platform (Chabutara). Following the violence, significant police forces were deployed to restore order and ensure public safety.

According to police reports, the confrontation occurred while the tehsildar and local authorities were present to address the issue. The situation quickly deteriorated, leading to a physical altercation between the groups. In response to the unrest, approximately 150 police personnel have been stationed throughout the village, particularly at key religious sites and strategic locations.

Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Antar Singh Kanesh assured that law enforcement is diligently monitoring the situation using CCTV and drone technology. "After yesterday evening's incident, the situation is completely under control. We have made proper arrangements here," he stated.

So far, two individuals have been reported injured; however, their health conditions have been described as stable. The police have initiated legal proceedings against both parties involved, and investigations are ongoing to determine the precise circumstances surrounding the clash. *—PTI*

SC grants anticipatory bail to actor Siddique

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

In a significant development for veteran Malayalam actor Siddique, the Supreme Court of India granted him anticipatory bail on Tuesday in connection with a rape allegation. A bench comprising Justices Bela M Trivedi and Satish Chandra Sharma mandated that the actor deposit his passport and cooperate with the investigation.

The court noted the considerable delay in filing the complaint, which was lodged eight years after the alleged incident occurred in 2016. Justices questioned the complainant's timing, highlighting her social media posts accusing multiple individuals, including Siddique, dating back to 2018.

Siddique PHOTO: PTI

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing Siddique, argued that the allegations have tarnished his reputation, stating that he had not seen the complainant since 2016. Ranjit Kumar, appearing for the Kerala government, insisted on the necessity of Siddique's custodial interrogation, asserting a prima facie case against him while recounting that the interim protection had hindered the investigation process.

Advocate Vrinda Grover, representing the complainant, detailed the events leading to the allegations and mentioned the impact on her career following the complaint. The court had previously granted Siddique interim protection from arrest on September 30, which has since been extended.

This case follows a broader trend of allegations against prominent figures within the film industry, spurred by the findings of a government-established committee. *—PTI*

Woman dies on flight from Kuala Lumpur

CHENNAI, 19 NOV

A 37-year-old woman travelling from Kuala Lumpur was pronounced dead upon the arrival of her flight on Tuesday. Police reported that the crew of the private airline discovered her unresponsive and immediately called for medical assistance. A team of doctors subsequently examined her and confirmed that she had suffered a heart attack. The woman, who was from Kallakurichi district in Tamil Nadu, was later taken to a nearby government hospital. Authorities are conducting further inquiries into the incident. *—PTI*

MP exempts 'Sabarmati Report's tax

BHOPAL, 19 NOV

The Madhya Pradesh government has announced that "The Sabarmati Report," a film depicting the 2002 Godhra train burning incident, will be declared tax-free in the state. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav made the announcement during a press briefing, expressing his intention to personally view the film and encouraging ministers, MLAs, and MPs to do the same. He described the film as a valuable narrative that reveals the truth behind the dark chapter of the Godhra incident, which ignited widespread communal riots in Gujart. Yadav criticised the Opposition for exploiting incident for political gain, asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, preserved the state's honour during that time. *—PTI*

Chouhan: 30% of India's soil degraded, action needed

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

In a global conference on soil, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan raised alarms over soil degradation affecting 30 per cent of India's land. He underscored the urgency of maintaining soil quality for sustainable agriculture, which is vital for achieving Sustainable Development Goals related to zero hunger, climate action, and life on land.

Chouhan noted the country's impressive production of over 330 million food grains annually, with exports valued at USD 50 billion. However, this success is overshadowed by deteriorating soil health, linked to rising fertiliser use, imbalanced consumption, resource exploitation, and poor management practices.

The minister outlined government initiatives such as distributing over 220 million soil health cards to farmers and promoting micro irrigation and organic farming. He acknowledged the need for enhanced efforts in light of rising temperatures and erratic rainfall patterns caused by climate change.

PHOTO: WIKIFARMER

NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand pointed to the limited adoption of conservation agriculture and urged the Indian Soil Scientists Society to lead broader, more effective solutions. The conference also featured notable figures from agricultural institutions, highlighting the need for immediate action. *—PTI*

Fake docs open hospital in Surat, shut it days later

GUJARAT, 19 NOV

A group of fake doctors opened a full-fledged hospital in Gujarat's Surat, naming top administrative and police officials as guests at the inauguration event without speaking to them.

The hospital was shut a day after its inauguration as the state government intervened to prevent botched treatment that may put lives at risk. Police have said that at least two out of its five co-founders hold fake degrees.

Police are investigating the degrees of the other three co-founders. The now closed Janseva Multispecialty hospital was inaugurated on Sunday. Police are verifying the degrees of the other two names on the invite.

Top officials were on inauguration invite, but the officials have reportedly said they were unaware of any such invite and none of them turned up for the event. *—Agencies*

SAY EX-CHIEFS

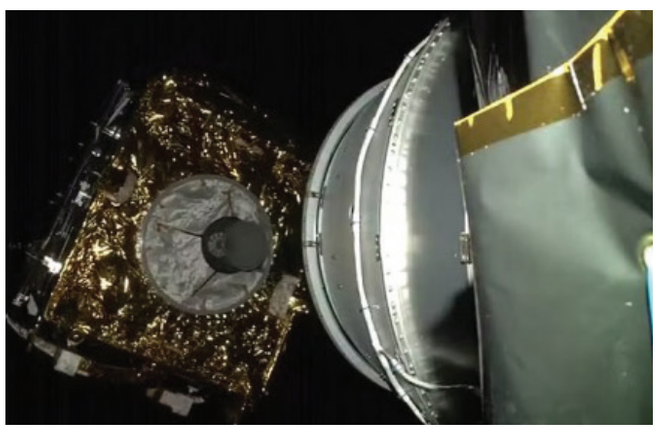
'ISRO turned to SpaceX due to limitations'

BENGALURU, 19 NOV

India has relied on Elon Musk's SpaceX to launch its latest communication satellite, GSAT-N2, after former ISRO chiefs revealed that the country's existing launch vehicles cannot accommodate payloads exceeding 4,000 kilograms. The satellite, weighing 4,700 kilograms, was successfully deployed into orbit aboard a Falcon 9 rocket.

GSAT-N2, a Ka-band high-throughout communication satellite, aims to enhance broadband services and in-flight connectivity across the Indian region. NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), ISRO's commercial arm, underscored the significance of this satellite in reaching even the most remote areas of the country.

K Sivan, former chairperson of ISRO, explained that the satellite exceeded the capabilities of ISRO's current launch vehicles, which can handle payloads of only up to four tonnes. He noted that plans are in place to improve ISRO's capacity, with ongoing efforts to develop more powerful launch vehicles.



GSAT-N2, a Ka-band high-throughout communication satellite, aims to enhance broadband services PHOTO: X

- The satellite, weighing 4,700 kilograms, was successfully deployed into orbit aboard a Falcon 9 rocket

Similarly, former ISRO chief G Madhavan Nair highlighted the necessity of opting for a larger launch vehicle from SpaceX due to the lack of suitable facilities within India. He mentioned that while ISRO aims to double the capacity of its next-generation launch vehicles, the urgency of the project necessitated collaboration with SpaceX. *—PTI*

Poorvi Prahar: Joint military exercise successfully held

ITANAGAR, 19 NOV

In a significant demonstration of military coordination, the Army, Navy, and Air Force conducted a joint exercise named 'Poorvi Prahar' in Mechuka, Arunachal Pradesh, from 14th to 17th November. A defence spokesperson reported that the four-day exercise validated the efficiency of joint operations in intelligence gathering, surveillance, reconnaissance, rapid mobilisation, deployment, and operational logistics.

The participating forces showcased their precision strike capabilities through high-tech equipment, underscoring the importance of integration among the services and the evolved civil-military fusion critical for operational success. Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen RC Tiwari and Eastern Air Command's Air Marshal IS Walia were present at the exercise. Lt Gen Tiwari praised the clockwork precision exhibited by troops and highlighted the significance of joint structures to enhance synergy among the military branches.

Notably, integrated joint operations were conducted across multiple domains on an unprecedented scale within the Eastern Theatre.

The exercise featured advanced weapons systems, including the M-777 Howitzer, the Navy's P-8I maritime patrol aircraft, swarm drones, FPV drones, and loitering munitions. To further boost operational effectiveness, helicopters such as the Chinook and Prachand were deployed. *—PTI*

HISTORIC UNITY IN WELLINGTON

Thousands of people gather outside New Zealand's parliament to protest a proposed law that would redefine the country's founding agreement between Indigenous Maori and the British Crown, in Wellington on Tuesday A sea of Maori sovereignty flags in red, black and white stretched down the lawn and into the streets. But marchers bore Samoan, Tongan, Indigenous Australian, US, Palestinian and Israeli flags, too
PHOTO: PTI

G20 weak on climate goals, strong on multilateralism

The G20's pushback on 'unilateral trade practices' is also seen as crucial for developing countries ***PHOTO: G20***

G20 leaders have not given a strong signal to negotiators trying to agree on a new finance package to support climate action in developing countries, many climate experts feel.

However, they say it is important that the 20 richest nations in the world, accounting for 80 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, have reaffirmed their support for multilateralism and the UN climate convention to solve climate problems.

This comes amid concerns about the US and Argentina pulling out of the Paris Agreement, which has hurt the morale of negotiators at the talks in Baku.

The G20's pushback on "unilateral trade practices", like the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, is also seen as crucial for developing countries.

That said, experts note some key gaps in the G20 statement. It does not explicitly mention transitioning away from fossil fuels or mobilising resources to address loss and damage caused by climate change.

Vaibhav Chaturvedi, a senior fellow at the Delhi-based Council on Energy, Environment, and Water, said the G20 is not the right platform to discuss the new climate finance package being negotiated at COP29 under the UNFCCC process.

> The G20 declaration could pressure countries to discuss these issues at COP29, especially since developed nations often use climate action to justify these trade policies

The real issues about quantum and who will contribute are not addressed at the G20. These questions go beyond the G20, he said.

He added that the G20 leaders' emphasis on multilateralism is important. "This is one of the first points in the climate section. Despite uncertainties like the US and Argentina pulling out, they have stressed that the multilateral process is key," Chaturvedi said.

Harjeet Singh, climate activist and Global Engagement Director for the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative, criticised developed nations in the G20 for failing to specify the trillions needed or ensure funds are given as grants, which are crucial for climate justice.

"Without decisive progress on finance at COP29, we are steering towards a catastrophic temperature scenario, where the most vulnerable will bear the gravest consequences," he said.

Trishant Dev, a programme officer at the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment, welcomed the G20's stand against restrictive trade measures. He said such measures hurt developing countries and need to be aligned with the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

The G20 declaration could pressure countries to discuss these issues at COP29, especially since developed nations often use climate action to justify these trade policies, he said.

Chaturvedi added that the G20 had made it clear that unilateral measures should not be used as unjustified trade restrictions.

Securing agreement on a new climate finance package to help developing countries cut emissions and adapt to climate change is a top priority for this year's UN climate talks. Different estimates suggest that USD 1.3 trillion is needed annually to tackle worsening climate impacts.

But countries are struggling to agree on how much money is needed, how the package will work, and who will contribute.

For developing nations, restrictive trade measures are another major concern.

Last week, India argued that these measures unfairly shift the burden of transitioning to low-carbon economies onto developing and low-income nations. At the same time, developed nations, which have historically caused the most emissions, are not meeting their climate finance commitments.

UN climate chief Simon Stiell on Saturday also urged G20 leaders to carry out rapid cuts in emissions to prevent climate-driven economic carnage. *—PTI*

SALAR سالار

'Pollution, climate impact 182M poor-nation children'

In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), three-fourths of those aged three or four years lack - nearly 182 million children - access to adequate nurture, thereby risking healthy development, according to a new series paper, published in The Lancet journal.

Child development is also affected by air pollution, climate change, and exposure to chemicals, which are emerging environmental risk factors, said an international team, including researchers from the Centre for Chronic Disease Control (CCDC), New Delhi.

The series builds on the foundation of the first 1,000 days of life - referring to the time period starting conception until two years old - and highlights how the 'next 1,000 days' (from age two to age five) is a crucial window of opportunity for providing nurturing care to children, the researchers said.

During this stage of "next 1,000 days", children are often not in direct regular contact with health or education services, with fewer than one in three children aged three or four attending early childhood care and education programmes in LMICs, said the researchers.

The authors called for an increased investment for this stage of child development, with a particular focus on improving access to high quality childhood care and education programmes, which should involve adequately paid and trained teachers and reasonable teacher-student ratios.

These programmes should also include child-centred play, evidence-based curricula, and warm, stimulating, and responsive classroom interactions, they said.

Author Aditi Roy, Senior Research Scientist, CCDC, told PTI, "The main concern for India is ensuring an equitable access to quality ECCE. There needs to be a holistic approach with an activity-based curriculum rather than traditional academic-focus rote learning which goes against the National Education Policy recommendations."

Further, data regarding children in India attending ECCE programmes is sketchy, with no reliable estimates of current reality, she said.

A 2022 report by a government's task force on ECCE said that 285.82 lakh children aged 3-6 years were covered under early childhood education in 2022 under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), with an almost equal number of boys and girls.

A 2018 Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) survey found that over 70 per cent of 3-year-olds, 85 per cent of 4-year-olds, 92 per cent of 5-year-olds and 96 per cent of 6-year-olds were attending a pre-school or school. The survey, facilitated by the non-profit 'Pratham', was conducted in nearly 600 rural districts.

"However, as there is no data for private entities, it is hard to provide an estimate. But clearly, there is a steady increase in the number of private pre-schools, also referred to as 'affordable primary schools' in India with questionable quality and no regulation," Roy cautioned.

While in recent years, the National Family Household Survey-5 has collected data for children aged five years who attended pre-primary school during the school year 2019-20, Roy said that the data might not reflect the current reality because that was a Covid year.

According to a new analysis, which is included in the Lancet series, providing one year of early childhood care and education for all children would cost on average under 0.15 per cent of the current gross domestic product of LMIC countries.

The series' authors said that the potential benefits of these programmes are 8-19 times higher than the cost of implementing them.

Children not involved in childhood care and education programmes miss crucial nurturing care opportunities as roughly 80 per cent of interventions promoting healthy development are taking place in such settings, the authors said.

They added that the programmes offer a platform to combine yearly screening and growth monitoring, along with food assistance, nutrition supplements, and caregiver support.

Further, air pollution, climate change, and chemical exposures as emerging environmental risk factors for poor child development, the authors said.

"Air pollution can affect early child development directly through physical changes and indirectly through disruptions in education as is currently happening in Delhi-NCR," Roy explained.

However, currently, there is no discussion at the policy level on how these climate factors are impacting children's development and how climate action plans should incorporate ECCE to address the emerging threat to progress, Roy added. *—PTI*

There is no discussion at policy level on how these climate factors are impacting children's development and how to address the emerging threat to progress ***PHOTO: WHO***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

How Trump's 2nd term could curb women's health progress

In the aftermath of the US election, much focus has been on the consequences for abortion rights across the US, and whether this will affect state-led initiatives to roll back restrictive legislation.

What has received much less attention is what will happen next to abortion services, sexual and reproductive health, and health more widely across many parts of the world, as a direct result of a decision President Trump is likely to take on his first day in office.

The US is by far the largest donor of aid for global health, providing US$15.8 billion (£7.8 billion) in 2022, compared to the next three largest donors Germany (US$4.4 billion), Japan ($3.2 billion) and the UK (US$2 billion). That means restrictions and reductions on that aid can have enormous consequences around the world.

In 1984, President Reagan implemented the Mexico City Policy (which became widely known as the global gag rule), under which any organisation providing abortion services (defined widely from actual abortion provision to basic advice) was banned from receiving US aid – even if that funding was not being spent on abortion services. Since then, Democratic administrations have removed this rule, only for succeeding Republican presidents to reinstate it.

The amount of funding affected by these rules rose from around $600 million under Bush-era workings of the global gag rule to around US$12 billion. The ruling will apply not just to the organisations directly receiving USAID funding, but to any organisation they work with, even if using non-USAID funds for that work.

The potential impact of these restrictions on how countries can use their public health funding is significant; the performance of the previous Trump administration suggests health organisations are right to be worried about what may be coming.

Research over decades shows that when the global gag rule is in place the health of women and children in particular are put at risk.

A study in Kenya, for example, found sexual and reproductive health services (which may include abortion services, but also offer critically important services for pregnant and new mothers, infants and children) were closed. Stocks of contraceptives also declined as a consequence of these restrictions on how aid was spent. In Uganda, organisations reportedly stopped providing services designed to reduce death from unsafe abortions, worried even this might fall into the vague definitions of "abortion services".

US is by far the largest donor of aid for global health, providing US$15.8 billion (£7.8 billion) in 2022, compared to the next three largest donors Germany, Japan, and the UK ***PHOTO: DW NEWS***

Leading international reproductive health charity MSI Reproductive Choices saw its overall funding fall by 17% in 2017 during Trump's first term, over its refusal to agree to the terms of the global gag rule. In some countries abortion rates rose by up to 40%, with many expected to be unsafe, as US funding for safe abortion facilities disappeared.

There's likely to be an increase in maternal and child mortality. The death rate from safe abortions is very small (around 1 per 100,000 births). Unsafe abortions, by contrast, are incredibly dangerous, with a death ratio of 200 per 100,000 abortions.

This type of restriction on how US aid can be spent doesn't just affect abortion services. It also undermines wider sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning access and information. The result is that unwanted pregnancy rates increase at the same time as abortion service provision is reduced, with the inevitable consequence of pushing many women into dangerous unsafe abortion procedures. One study suggested an additional 30,000 maternal and child deaths occurred annually as a direct result.

The affect on advice on and availability of modern contraception, especially condoms, also brings with it additional health challenges. Best practice has long suggested integrating sexual health services with other health services including HIV testing and treatment, screening for some cancers and antenatal care, can improve health outcomes.

Undermining one aspect of these services has a knock-on effect on all of them. A 2022 study suggested that across highly US-aid dependent countries, there have been an additional 90,000 new HIV infections every year when the global gag rule has been in force.

Reduced access to contraception

Nepal, which enshrined the right to abortion and requires all government health facilities to offer free abortion services in its 2018 Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Rights Act, is one country that could be particularly badly affected. The US is the largest bilateral donor for health in Nepal and has provided more than three-fifths of aid for family planning and reproductive health under President Biden. One study found maternal and child health services in Nepal as a whole worsened under Trump's last term, not just those parts linked to abortion services.

When these kind of restrictions are in place the number of abortions has increased. And much of that increase is happening in unregulated, dangerous places, adding to the risk of death for pregnant women.

What might happen next?

Under previous US presidents, other donors have increased their commitments in order to try and protect sexual and reproductive health services and wider public health from the devastating impact of US policy.

It is critical that donors, especially those in Europe (including the UK), announce their plans now for how they will step up their support to protect women's health and access to safe abortions, in order to prevent the closure of these vital services. Not just for the next four years but for the longer term.

These restrictions create the precise opposite of what they set out to achieve, resulting in more abortions and more deaths. *—PTI*

Pak bans public gatherings ahead of PTI's protest

ISLAMABAD,19 NOV

Pakistan's federal authorities have imposed a two-month ban on public gatherings in the capital region ahead of a planned protest by Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) for the demand of the release of its jailed founding leader. The federal government has imposed Section 144 in Islamabad, a colonial law, prohibiting the public assemblies, with the ban potentially not impacting the PTI, which has previously violated Section 144. Khan's sister Aleema Khan has called for everyone from the PTI, including workers, members of parliament, and party supporters, to join the protest on 24 November. PTI demanded the restoration of the judiciary, the release of party leadership and workers, and return of the stolen mandate for the election. *—PTI*

G20 urge aid to Gaza, end to Ukraine war

The joint statement was endorsed by all group members but fell short of complete unanimity

RIO DE JANEIRO, 19 NOV

Leaders of the world's 20 major economies called for a global pact to combat hunger, more aid for war-torn Gaza and an end to hostilities in the Mideast and Ukraine, issuing a joint declaration Monday that was heavy on generalities but short of details on how to accomplish those goals.

The joint statement was endorsed by group members but fell short of complete unanimity. It also called for a future global tax on billionaires and for reforms allowing the eventual expansion of the United Nation Security Council (UNSC) beyond its five current permanent members.

At the start of the three-day meeting which formally ends on Wednesday, experts doubted Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva could convince the assembled leaders to hammer out any agreement at all in a gathering rife with uncertainty over the incoming administration of US president-elect Donald Trump, and heightened global tensions over wars in the Mideast and Ukraine.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his UK counterpart Keir Starmer in Brazil on the sidelines of G-20 summit on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Argentina challenged some The declaration referred to the "catastrophic humanitarian situation in the Gaza and the escalation in Lebanon," stressing the urgent need to expand humanitarian assistance and better protect civilians.

> The declaration referred to the "catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza and escalation in Lebanon," stressing urgent need to expand humanitarian aid and better protect civilians

Biden's decision to ease restrictions on Ukraine's use of longer-range US missiles to allow that country to strike more deeply inside Russia also played into the meetings.

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not attend the meeting, and instead sent his foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov.

The G20 declaration highlighted the human suffering in Ukraine while calling for peace, without naming Russia.

The declaration did call for a possible tax on global billionaires, which Lula supports. Such a tax would affect about 3,000 people around the world, including about 100 in Latin America.

A demonstration on Sunday at Rio's Copacabana beach featured 733 empty plates spread across the sand to represent the 733 million people who went hungry in 2023, according to United Nations data.

The United States announced shortly before a UN summit in September that it supports two new permanent seats for African countries, without veto power, and a first-ever non-permanent seat for a small island developing nation. But the Group of Four – Brazil, Germany, India and Japan – support each other's bids for permanent seats. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Japanese poet Shuntaro Tanikawa dies at 92

TOKYO, 19 NOV

Shuntaro Tanikawa, who pioneered modern Japanese poetry, poignant but conversational in its divergence from haiku and other traditions, has died. He was 92. Tanikawa, who translated the "Peanuts" comic strip and penned the lyrics for the theme song of the animation series "Astro Boy," died 13 November, his son Kensaku Tanikawa said on Tuesday. He said his father died at a Tokyo hospital due to old age. Tanikawa stunned the literary world with his 1952 debut "Two Billion Light Years of Solitude," a bold look at the cosmic in daily life, sensual, vivid but simple in its use of everyday language. Some of his works were made into picture books for children, and they are often featured in Japanese school textbooks. *—PTI*

SUV crashes at Hunan school gate, kids hurt

TAIPEI,19 NOV

An SUV reportedly caused numerous injuries at the gate of an elementary school in central China's Hunan province. The incident occurred around 8am, and it is unclear whether the vehicle lost control or was a deliberate attack. The driver was subdued by parents and security guards, and some of the injured were sent to the hospital. The total casualty count is still unknown. The incident sparked anger and frustration on Chinese internet sites, as comments on Chinese internet sites reflected anger and frustration with recurring incidents of violence against citizens. China faces violence, including knifings and homemade explosives, in schools. *—PTI*

UK farmers descend on Parl to protest tax

LONDON, 19 NOV

With banners, bullhorns, toy tractors and an angry message, thousands of British farmers descended on Parliament on Tuesday to protest a tax hike they say will deal a "hammer blow" to struggling family farms. UK farmers are rarely as militant as their European neighbours, and Britain has not seen such protests like those that have snarled other European countries. Now, though, farmers say they will step up their action if the government doesn't listen. The flashpoint is the government's decision in its budget last month to scrap a tax break dating from the 1990s that exempts agricultural property from inheritance tax. From April 2026, farms worth more than USD 1.3 million face a 20 per cent tax when the owner dies and they are passed on to the next generation. *—PTI*

Will use military for deportations, says Trump

WASHINGTON DC, 19 NOV

US president-elect Donald Trump said on Monday that his administration would declare a national emergency and use the US military to carry out mass deportations of undocumented immigrants.

In an early morning social media post, Trump responded "TRUE!!!" to a post by Tom Fitton, the president of the conservative group Judicial Watch, who wrote on 8 November that the next administration "will use military assets to reverse the Biden invasion through a mass deportation program".

Since his decisive victory, Trump has said he intends to make good on his campaign promise to execute mass deportations, beginning on the first day of his presidency. But many aspects of what he has described as the "largest deportation program in American history" remain unclear.

Experts and advocates say a deportation campaign on the scale Trump has outlined would raise legal and logistical challenges, not to mention the soaring costs and infrastructure needed to detail and deport millions of people, many of whom have lived in the country for at least a decade, contribute to the workforce and share a household with US citizen family members.

According to an estimate by the American Immigration Council, deporting 1 million people a year would cost more than USD 960 billion over a decade.

There were an estimated 11 million people living in the United States without authorization as of 2022, according to an analysis by Pew Research. Migration to the US border reached record levels in 2022 and 2023 before dropping dramatically in 2024, following stepped-up enforcement by Mexico and an asylum clampdown by the Biden administration. *—Courtesy, Guardian*

1,000 DAYS OF WAR

3rd Russian strike in 3 days kills more Ukrainian civilians as war hits milestone

MOSCOW, 19 NOV

A third Russian strike in three days on a civilian residential area in Ukraine killed at least 12 people, including a child, officials said Tuesday, as the war reached its 1,000th day. The strike by a Shahed drone in the northern Sumy region injured 11 others, including two children, Ukraine's Rescue Services said, adding that more people could be trapped under the rubble.

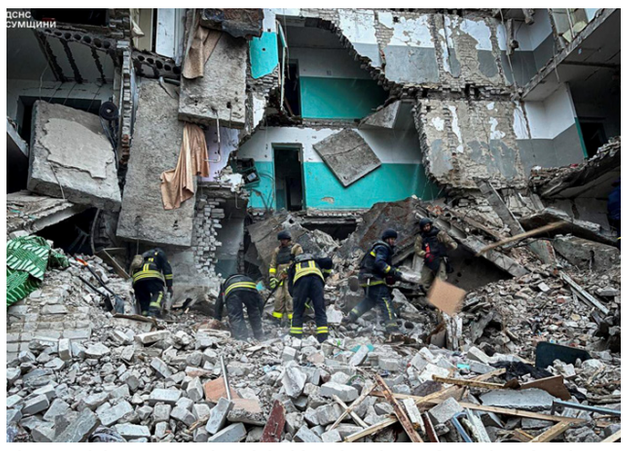
The attack late on Monday night hit a dormitory of an educational facility in the town of Hlukhiv, the regional administration said.

Ukraine has repeatedly been clobbered by Russian drones and missiles, while on the battlefield it is under severe Russian pressure at places on the about 1,000-km front line where its army is stretched thin against a bigger adversary. On Sunday, a Russian ballistic missile with cluster munitions struck a residential area of Sumy in northern Ukraine, killing 11 people and injuring 84 others. On Monday, a Russian missile barrage sparked apartment fires in the southern port of Odesa, killing at least 10 people and injuring 43.

> Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the series of aerial strikes proved that Russian President Vladimir Putin was not interest in ending the war

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the series of aerial strikes proved that Russian President Vladimir Putin was not interest in ending the war.

"Each new attack by Russia only confirms Putin's true intentions. He wants the war to continue. Talks about peace are not interesting to him. We must force Russia to a just peace by force," Zelenskyy said. *—PTI*



The attack late on Monday night hit a dormitory of an educational facility in the town of Hlukhiv **PHOTO: PTI**

Russian Natural Resources and Ecology Minister Alexandr Kozlov with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang on Tuesday **PHOTO: YONHAP**

Kim meets Russian Resources Minister amid deepening ties

PYONGYANG, 14 NOV

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has met with Russia's resources minister, state media has reported, in the latest indication of rapidly warming relations between the countries.

North Korean leader's meeting comes amid concern in Western capitals over growing ties between Pyongyang and Moscow.

Russian Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Alexander Kozlov led a government delegation to Pyongyang to take part in the 11th meeting of the DPRK-Russia Inter-governmental Committee for Cooperation in Trade, Economy, Science and Technology, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported on Tuesday.

The pair met at the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee headquarters, with Kim expressing appreciation for the fact that "bilateral solidarity and cooperation have been closer and deepened in different fields since the conclusion of a new treaty between" North Korea and Russia, the KCNA said.

The Treaty on Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, ratified by Russia's parliament on 6 November, was first signed in Pyongyang in June during a state visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

It obliges both countries to provide immediate military assistance to one another using "all means" necessary if either faces "aggression".

The treaty's ratification followed reports that 10,000 North Korean soldiers were deployed to support Moscow in its war in Ukraine.

Intelligence officials in the United States and South Korea have said that North Korean troops have already taken part in combat operations in Russia's Kursk region.

—Courtesy, Al Jazeera

Men prioritised money over life leading to Indians' deaths

FERGUS FALLS, 19 NOV

Two men put financial profit over human life when they attempted to smuggle a couple from India and their two young children across the US-Canada border in heavy snow and bone-chilling winds, leading to the family freezing to death, prosecutors said Monday.

Prosecutors allege Indian national Harshkumar Ramanlal Patel, 29, ran part of a sprawling human smuggling scheme and recruited Steve Shand, 50, to shuttle migrants across the border. Both men have pleaded not guilty to four federal counts related to human smuggling. Their trial in Minnesota is expected to last about five days.

Prosecutors say the family of four -- 39-year-old Jagdish Patel; his wife, Vaishaliben, who was in her mid-30s; their 11-year-old daughter, Vihangi; and three-year-old son, Dharmik -- died on 19 January, 2022, after spending hours wandering in blizzard conditions. Shand had been waiting in a truck for 11 migrants, including the family from Gujarat state, as the wind chill reached minus 38 degrees Celsius.

When Patel's body was found, he was holding Dharmik. *—PTI*

Jagdish Patel, his wife, Vaishaliben, daughter Vihangi and son Dharmik died on 19 January, 2022 **PHOTO: PTI**

NO FOUL PLAY IN GURSIMRAN'S DEATH, SAYS CANADA POLICE

TORONTO, 19 NOV

Canadian police on Tuesday said that the death of a 19-year-old Indian-origin girl, Gursimran Kaur whose body was found inside Walmart bakery oven last month, was not the result of foul play.

Officers responded to a report of a sudden death at the Walmart on Mumford Road around 9.30pm on 19 October. Kaur's mother, also a Walmart employee, discovered her after noticing she had been missing for an hour. Halifax Regional Police, after reviewing video footage, conducting interviews, and collaborating with labor and medical officials, concluded their investigation, stating, "We do not believe anyone else was involved." Despite online theories suggesting accidental entrapment was unlikely, authorities dismissed suspicions. Walmart has since announced plans to remove the oven as part of a nationwide remodel.

Kaur's family has requested privacy, with police extending condolences during this tragic time. *—Agencies*

NATIONAL SECURITY CASE

45 pro-democracy activists jailed in Hong Kong

HONG KONG, 19 NOV

Forty-five ex-lawmakers and activists were sentenced to four to 10 years in prison on Tuesday in Hong Kong's biggest national security case under a Beijing-imposed law that crushed a once-thriving pro-democracy movement.

They were prosecuted under the 2020 national security law for their roles in an unofficial primary election. Prosecutors said their aim was to paralyse Hong Kong's government and force the city's leader to resign by aiming to win a legislative majority and using it to block government budgets indiscriminately.

The unofficial primary held in July 2020 drew 610,000 voters, and its winners had been expected to advance to the official election. Authorities cancelled the official legislative election, however, citing public health risks during the Covid-19 pandemic. Legal scholar Benny Tai, whom the judges called the mastermind, received the longest sentence of 10 years. Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said her government was "gravely concerned" by the sentences for Australian citizen Gordon Ng and the other activists.

Taiwan presidential office spokesperson Karen Kuo said democracy is not a crime and condemned the Chinese government for using what she called unjust procedures to suppress the political participationof Hong Kong pro-democracy figures. The US strongly condemned the sentences, saying the defendants were aggressively prosecuted and jailed for participating in normal political activity protected under the city's mini-constitution. "We call on (Beijing) and Hong Kong authorities to cease politically motivated prosecutions of Hong Kong citizens and to immediately release all political prisoners and individuals jailed for their peaceful advocacy for rights and freedoms," it said in a statement. *—PTI*

The pro-democracy activists were prosecuted under the 2020 national security law for their roles in an unofficial primary election **PHOTO: X**

Millionaire's anti-ageing experiment backfires

WASHINGTON DC, 19 NOV

Bryan Johnson, a tech entrepreneur known for his efforts to reverse aging and extend human lifespan, recently shared a shocking face image on Instagram after attempting to inject donor fat into his face.

"I got really lean and lost a lot of fat-especially in my face. My biomarkers were improving, but I looked gaunt," he explained in his post. In 2023, he received a plasma transfusion from his then-17-year-old son, Talmage, in 2023, while also giving some of his own blood to his father, Richard.

The "Project Baby Face" procedure was a response to his weight loss after a strict 1,950-calorie diet. However, just 30 minutes after the procedure, his face began to bloat and he experienced a severe allergic reaction.

He takes 111 pills per day as part of his anti-aging regimen. Johnson's team is developing plans for their next anti-ageing endeavor under Project Blueprint, which includes unconventional methods like blood transfusions, "young blood" procedure, rigid diet, and gene therapy injections. *—Agencies*

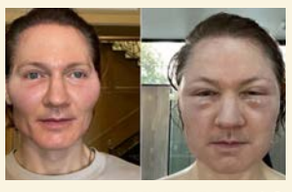


PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/ @ BRYANJOHNSON

Gold jumps ₹600; silver climbs ₹1,500

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Gold prices jumped Rs 600 to Rs 78,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid a strong global trend in the overseas market, according to the All India Sarafa Association. On Monday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 77,450 per 10 grams. Gold prices also rose due to increased buying by local jewellers and retailers for the wedding festivities, traders said. Silver bounced Rs 1,500 to Rs 93,500 per kg against the previous close of Rs 92,000 per kg on Monday. Gold price of 99.5 per cent purity rose Rs 600 to Rs 77,650 per 10 grams. It had ended at Rs 77,050 per 10 grams in the previous session. Meanwhile, in futures trade on the MCX, gold contracts for December delivery jumped Rs 615 or 0.82 per cent to trade at Rs 75,662 per 10 grams —*PTI*

Rupee settles 1P lower at 84.43 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 19 NOV

The rupee traded in an almost flat note and settled 1 paisa lower at 84.43 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as support from positive domestic equity markets and lower crude oil prices was negated by strength of the American currency in the overseas market. Forex traders said the Ukraine-Russia war took a new turn with Russia updating its nuclear doctrine and Ukraine aimed American missiles at Russia. Safe haven assets like Gold, JPY and CHF and to some extent dollar were bought and rupee felt the heat and was sold at the closing hours. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.39 and stayed range-bound throughout the session. It finally settled at 84.43 (provisional) against the greenback, down 1 paisa from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee recovered from its lowest level of 84.46 to settle 4 paise higher at 84.42 against the US dollar. —*PTI*

RBI cautions against fake video of Guv

MUMBAI, 19 NOV

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday cautioned public against misleading videos of the RBI governor being circulated on social media about some investment schemes by the central bank. In a statement, the RBI said, "It has come to the notice of Reserve Bank of India that fake videos of the Governor are being circulated in social media that claim launch of or support to some investment schemes by the RBI." These videos attempt to advise people to invest their money in such schemes through use of technological tools. "RBI clarifies that its officials are not involved in or support any such activities, and these videos are fake. RBI does not give any such financial investment advice," the statement said. —*PTI*

Satvik Green Energy eyes ₹1,150 cr via IPO

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Solar panel maker Satvik Green Energy has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 1,150 crore through an initial public offering (IPO). The Haryana-based company's proposed IPO is a combination of fresh issue of shares worth Rs 850 crore and an offer for sale of Rs 300 crore by promoters, said the draft red herring prospectus filed on Monday. At present, promoters hold over 90 per cent stake in the company. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used to pay debt, investment in its subsidiary Saatvik Solar Industries, in the form of debt or equity for payment of borrowings, for setting up of a 4 GW solar PV module manufacturing facility in Odisha and for general corporate purposes. The company has an operational capacity of about 1.8 GW —*PTI*

Meta plans to challenge ₹213 crore penalty by CCI

WhatsApp faces 5-year data sharing ban with Meta app

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

After the Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed a Rs 213-crore penalty on Meta in relation to WhatsApp privacy policy, the company said it disagrees with the watchdog's decision and plans to appeal.

The CCI on Monday asked WhatsApp to refrain from sharing user data with other applications, owned by Meta, for advertising purposes for a period of five years.

India's competition watchdog imposed a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore on the social media giant for unfair business ways with respect to WhatsApp privacy policy update done in 2021.

Besides, the competition watchdog has directed Meta to cease and desist from anti-competitive practices.

Meta and WhatsApp have also been asked to implement certain behavioural remedies within a defined timeline to address the anti-competition issues, according to a CCI order.

Meta further said the 2021 update was about introducing optional business features on WhatsApp PHOTO: PTI

A Meta spokesperson said that the company disagreed with the CCI's decision and plans to appeal. "As a reminder, the 2021 update did not change the privacy of people's personal messages and was offered as a choice for users at the time. We also ensured no one would have their accounts deleted or lose functionality of the WhatsApp service because of this update," the spokesperson said.

Meta further said the update was about introducing optional business features on WhatsApp and provided further transparency about data collection and usage.

The Meta spokesperson said that since that time, WhatsApp has been incredibly valuable to people and businesses, enabling organisations and government institutions to deliver citizen services through Covid and beyond, and as well as supporting small businesses in furtherance of the India economy.

"WhatsApp is able to do all of this because it offers services supported by Meta. We are committed to finding a path forward that allows us to continue providing the experiences that people and businesses have come to expect from us," Meta spokesperson said. —*PTI*

SENSEX UP 239.37 POINTS

Sensex, Nifty rebound after days of downtrend

MUMBAI, 19 NOV

PHOTO: PTI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty bounced back on Tuesday after days of downtrend on value-buying at lower levels and rally in blue-chip stocks HDFC Bank, Tech Mahindra and M&M.

Continuous buying by domestic institutional investors also supported the indices, traders said.

Snapping its four days of decline, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 239.37 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 77,578.38. However, fag-end decline in Reliance Industries restricted the market rally. During the day, it zoomed 1,112.64 points or 1.43 per cent to 78,451.65.

The NSE Nifty also bounced back after falling in the past seven trading days. It went up by 64.70 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at 23,518.50.

From the 30-share Sensex pack, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tech Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Titan, Tata Motors, UltraTech Cement, Power Grid and Infosys were the biggest gainers.

In contrast, Reliance Industries, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Maruti, Tata Steel and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher.

Leading stock exchanges BSE and NSE have declared a holiday on 20 November for elections in Maharashtra. —*PTI*

'CHOOSE AFFORDABILITY'

Slash GST to bolster EV sector: FICCI EV panel Chair Motwani

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

The GST on batteries and charging services need to be reduced to keep EVs competitive, said FICCI Electric Vehicle Committee Chair Sulajja Firodia Motwani on Tuesday.

Speaking at the sidelines of FICCI National Conference on EVs in the national capital, she also highlighted the need to enhance the PM E-Drive corpus to support increased sales of EVs. "We would be making a recommendation to the GST council to rationalise the GST taxation on EV-related areas," Motwani said.

Elaborating on the demands, she said, "Currently the GST on charging services is 18 per cent, which we would request to bring down to 5 per cent, so that charging becomes more affordable to the consumers."

The GST on batteries should also come down to 5 per cent, she said. "While EVs attract a GST of 5 per cent, GST on batteries is 18 per cent. The request is to reduce it to 5 per cent, so that when consumers buy replacement batteries, it is more affordable," Motwani said.

These two reforms on GST will help a lot in making EVs more competitive for the consumers, she said.

Welcoming the PM E-Drive scheme, Motwani said that with rising demand, there was a need to review the incentive amounts.

"The incentive amounts have to be reviewed so that the budget under the PM E-Drive scheme overall is enhanced to ensure that the vehicles sold in the next two years are eligible for the incentive," she stated. —*PTI*

Govt aware of tax concerns

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Advisor to Prime Minister at PMO Tarun Kapoor PHOTO: ANI

The automotive industry needs to do more in terms of driving in new electric cars to enhance customer response enabling higher adoption of such models, said Advisor to Prime Minister at PMO Tarun Kapoor on Tuesday.

Speaking at the FICCI National Conference on Electric Vehicles in the national capital, he said the government will look at all aspects, including taxation issues so that the industry remains viable.

"In four-wheelers, what I think is that industry itself has to play a much, much larger role than the government because we need more products. We need better products, and we need more publicity," Kapoor said.

He said the government was working towards enhancing charging infrastructure with even the PM-E Drive scheme laying a lot of emphasis on it. "But on product and on getting more customer satisfaction and to give more choice, the industry has to plan a much bigger role," Kapoor said.

On taxation issues, he said, "We understand that taxation is a major issue. We have to look at all aspects, all levels, so that the industry remains viable".

Kapoor noted that while the PM E-Drive scheme doesn't specifically cover four-wheelers, government support for the segment is very much there. —*PTI*

INDIA'S RE TO TOUCH 250 GW BY 2026, SAYS ICRA

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Domestic renewable energy (RE) capacity is expected to reach 250 GW by March 2026, Indian Credit Rating Agency (Icra) said on Tuesday. The capacity addition will be driven by the project pipeline of over 80 GW, following the significant improvement in tendering activity in FY2024, it said.

Icra said it expected India's installed capacity, including large hydro projects, to increase to about 250 GW by March 2026 from the level of 201 GW as of September 2024.

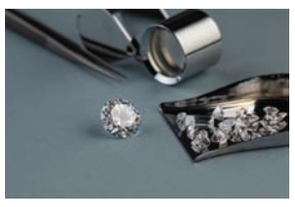
"We expect the rooftop solar segment and the commercial and industrial segments to contribute significantly to the capacity addition. Nevertheless, challenges remain on the execution front, with respect to delays in land acquisition and transmission connectivity. These, if sustained, could hamper the sector's prospects," said Girishkumar Kadam, senior vice president and co-group head of corporate ratings at Icra.

Icra expects the energy storage capacity requirement of 50 GW by 2030 to be met through a mix of battery and pumped storage hydro projects, he said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

CCPA to regulate diamonds, protect buyers

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV


The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will soon release guidelines on diamond sector PHOTO: PTI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will soon release guidelines on diamond sector to ensure explicit labelling and certification of all diamonds and prohibit the use of misleading terms in trade.

The CCPA has organised a stakeholder consultation on consumer protection in the diamond sector to deliberate on the use of appropriate terminology for diamonds, an official statement said on Tuesday.

The consultation, chaired by Nidhi Khare, Chief Commissioner, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), brought together key industry stakeholders and experts.

The meeting addressed critical concerns regarding the lack of standardised terminology and inadequate disclosure practices in the diamond sector. Industry consensus emphasised the need for ethical marketing practices and consistent terminology to enhance consumer protection.

The consultation was a significant step toward building a transparent and consumer-centric diamond market.

During the consultation, the broad key aspects and prevailing Legal and Regulatory frameworks were discussed in detail.

Citing an example, the CCPA said that The Legal Metrology Act, 2009, under Section 12, provides the unit of mass for diamonds, pearls, and precious stones as the carat (symbol: c), equivalent to 200 milligrams or one five-thousandth of a kilogram, ensuring standardised measurements for consistency in commercial transactions across the diamond industry.To maintain market clarity, synthetic diamonds are also prohibited from being graded alongside natural diamonds. —*PTI*

Boeing layoffs reach 2,200 in Washington

SEATTLE, 19 NOV

The aerospace giant announced in October that it planned to cut about 10 per cent of its workforce in the coming months PHOTO: X

Boeing said in a notice filed with Washington's Employment Security Department on Monday that it has so far laid off 2,199 workers in the state, among job cuts that will eventually total about 17,000 across the company.

The aerospace giant announced in October that it planned to cut about 10 per cent of its workforce in the coming months as it struggled to recover from financial and regulatory troubles, as well as a strike by its machinists that lasted nearly two months.

The planned cuts include workers at Boeing facilities across the country, from Washington to Missouri to Arizona to South Carolina, The Seattle Times reported. They also appeared to impact workers in all three of Boeing's divisions – commercial aeroplanes, defence and global services.

Before the layoff began last week, Boeing had 66,000 workers in Washington. —*PTI*

GenX, millennials more open to adopting agentic AI

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

PHOTO: X

Generation X and millennials are more receptive when it comes to agentic artificial intelligence (AI), a report said.

Agentic AI refers to autonomous agents that can independently make decisions and perform tasks, adapting and learning from experiences without direct human oversight.

Salesforce's State of the AI Connected Customer research said millennials and Gen Xers in India are more willing than Gen Z and Baby Boomers to work with agents for faster, more proactive service.

"The research shows Gen X (58 per cent) and millennials (57 per cent) are more willing than Gen Z (51 per cent) and Baby Boomers (42 per cent) to use AI agents to improve their customer experience by creating more personalised, or useful content," it said.

Baby Boomers are people born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X from 1965 to 1980, Millennials from 1981 to 1996, and Generation Z from 1997 to 2012.

The report further said consumer trust has reached its lowest level in eight years, making it more essential than ever to build that trust, especially with AI advancements.

More than half of the respondents surveyed trust companies less than they did a year ago, and feel companies are reckless with customer data.

The research is based on a survey of 15,015 consumers across India, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, and the US. —*PTI*

TO WOO INVESTORS

Bihar offers sops to boost leather industry

KANPUR, 19 NOV

Armed with abundant resources and robust infrastructure, Bihar touted its investor-friendly policy that offers incentives ranging from capital subsidy to interest subvention on loans as it wooed investments in burgeoning leather industry in the state.

The Bihar Leather Investors' Meet was hosted in Kanpur on 18 November, together with industry leaders, policymakers and investors to showcase Bihar's emerging role as a global leather industry hub.

The event, under Bihar Business Connect 2024, showcased the state's abundant resources, advanced infrastructure, and progressive policies aimed at fostering sustainable growth and innovation in the sector, officials and a press statement said.

Bihar Leather Investors' Meet was hosted in Kanpur on 18 November, together with industry leaders, policymakers and investors PHOTO: PTI

At the meet, the state unveiled its Textile & Leather Policy framework and modern infrastructure to attract global leather industry investments.

The key incentives in Bihar's Textile & Leather Policy include capital subsidies, State-GST reimbursements, interest subventions, employment generation, and power tariff subsidies. Export-oriented units receive additional support under the state's Export Promotion Policy.

The state conducted a study in Kanpur to replicate its success in Bihar, while leveraging incentives, such as a 30 per cent capital subsidy, he said. "Additionally, we will ensure the availability of a large pool of semi-skilled and skilled workers, access to a vast market, excellent connectivity, and 24x7 water and power supply." —*PTI*

Amazon opens global selling for Indians

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

E-commerce major Amazon on Tuesday said it has expanded its cross-border logistics programme Global Selling SEND (Seller Exports and Delivery), which will help Indian exporters ship goods abroad.

The company also announced the launch of Export Navigator – a one-stop dashboard to assist sellers with all compliance requirements related to overseas shipment.

"Amazon has expanded its flagship cross-border logistics programme, Amazon Global Selling SEND, with the addition of three new carriers on air and ocean lanes from India to the US, the UK and Germany.

"Additionally, to enable a cheap and bulk storage facility for Indian exporters, SEND is now integrated with Amazon Warehousing and Distribution, a low-cost bulk storage solution that helps sellers with more efficient inventory deployment and distribution," a company statement said.

Through SEND, Amazon said, Indian exporters will be able to access cross-border logistics from various third-party providers for shipping goods to Amazon fulfilment centres abroad.

The service will offer competitive pricing and Amazon-supported shipping, all integrated within Amazon Seller Central for booking, tracking, and payments. —*ANI*

I've got nothing but respect for Virat Kohli: Nathan Lyon

Kohli has been enduring a lean patch over the past few months

PERTH, 19 NOV

Virat Kohli has been struggling for form of late but the veteran Australia spinner has nothing but respect for the Indian superstar, who he says is a champion you can not write off.

Kohli has been enduring a lean patch over the past few months. In his last 60 Test innings, he has managed just two centuries and 11 half-centuries. This year, he has averaged only 22.72 across six Tests, and in the three games against New Zealand, he could manage only 93 runs.

But Lyon remains wary of what Kohli could do in the five-match Test series beginning here on Friday.

"Overall, look at his record. You don't write off champions. I've got nothing but respect for Virat," Lyon was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

"I want to get him out, there's no point in hiding behind that, but it's challenging. It's been pretty amazing competing against him so many times.

"Him and Smithy (Steve Smith) are probably the best two batters in our last era of this last decade," said the 36-year-old off-spinner with 530 wickets from 129 Tests.

Nathan Lyon

Lyon is one of the four members of the current squad who were part of Australia's last successful Test series against India in 2014-15. India has won the last two series in Australia but they have come here after a shock 0-3 loss at home against New Zealand. Lyon doesn't believe that India is vulnerable this time around.

"They're dangerous all the time. They're a side full of superstars. They've got so much experience, but talented youth as well and you can never write off that," said Lyon, who took 22 wickets when Australia toured India in 2023. "I was fascinated by that series to New Zealand, but we're expecting the best India that we've played against for several years now."

—PTI

Virat Kohli

NATIONS LEAGUE

Bryan converts late penalty as Spain beat Switzerland 3-2

PARIS, 19 NOV

A late penalty from Bryan Zaragoza secured Spain a 3-2 win over Switzerland in their final Nations League Group A4 game on Monday, with the Spaniards guaranteed the top spot before kick-off and the Swiss already confirmed as relegated.

Holders Spain finished with 16 points and are through to the quarter-finals while bottom side Switzerland ended on two. Denmark also made the quarter-finals with a 0-0 draw in Serbia to secure second place. In a game with little to play for, manager Luis de la Fuente fielded a completely different starting 11 to the one that beat Denmark 2-1 on Friday, and the European champions showed their strength in depth as a relatively inexperienced side got the job done.

Spain opened the scoring in the 32nd minute when Jeremy Pino fired home after Pedri had his penalty saved before the Swiss leveled through Joel Monteiro in the 63rd, but the hosts were back in front five minutes later when Bryan Gil netted.

Bryan Zaragoza

Switzerland thought they had snatched a draw when Andi Zeqiri netted a penalty five minutes from time but another spot-kick in added time earned the Spanish side the win.

Spain's attacking play lacked its usual intensity and in the early stages, Nico Williams rounded two Swiss players to reach the edge of the area but with no movement from his teammates opted for a shot that sailed over the bar.

Alvaro Morata was taken down by Ricardo Rodriguez for the first penalty. Pedri's spot kick was parried away by Swiss keeper Yvon Mvogo and Williams's rebounded effort was blocked but Pino pounced on the edge of the six-yard box to score.

The game livened up after the break and substitute Joel Monteiro charged through the home defence before slotting the ball into the net.

—PTI

PHOTO: PTI

Shefali dropped from ODI series in Australia

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Top-order batter Shafali Verma was on Tuesday dropped from India's 16-member women's team for the three-match ODI series in Australia in December after a string of poor performances in the past year. The BCCI selectors seem to have once again lost patience with the 20-year-old right-handed batter, whose recent ODI form has been disappointing. Shafali has scored just 108 runs in six matches this year with 33 being the highest. She was dropped in December last year from the team midway through the home ODI series against Australia based on her poor run, before making a comeback against South Africa in June this year in Bengaluru.—*PTI*

Croatia, Denmark qualify for Nations League QFs

MADRID, 19 NOV

Denmark and Croatia completed the Nations League quarterfinals lineup after both sides secured draws. Denmark went 0-0 in Serbia, and Croatia came from behind to share 1-1 with visiting Portugal. They joined France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands in the last eight. The quarterfinals will be held from 20-23 March.In Warsaw, Liverpool fullback Andy Robertson scored an injury-time header to give Scotland a 2-1 win over Poland and send the host down into League B. Scotland has a playoff to secure its League A status.—*PTI*

Federer pens emotional note for retiring Nadal

PARIS, 19 NOV

Showing Off Those Biceps Roger Federer Pens Emotional Note For Retiring Rafael Nadal One of the greatest sportsmen of all time, Rafael Nadal, prepares to say 'au revoir' to the game that made him a legend. The man who dominated the French Open as if it was his backyard, draws curtains to an illustrious career with the Davis Cup finals in 2024. Seeing Nadal hold the tennis racquet in his hand for one final time as a professional, the entire sporting fraternity is emotional. While the sporting world is bound to miss him as he moves from the game, there isn't a rival of his who is going to enjoy his exit. Roger Federer, arguably the biggest rival Nadal has faced on the tennis court, penned an emotional note as the 38-year-old prepares for his showdown on the court.—*PTI*

Kane believes 2026 WC won't be his England swansong

LONDON, 19 NOV

Captain Harry Kane believes the 2026 World Cup will not be his last appearance for England.

There is increasing scrutiny about the 31-year-old Kane's future, even though he extended his all-time England scoring record to 69 goals in 103 appearances as Ireland was beaten 5-0 on Sunday at Wembley Stadium.

The Bayern Munich striker was surprisingly omitted from the 3-0 win against Greece last Thursday. A statue and mural of Kane were unveiled on Monday at the east London home of his former youth team Ridgeway Rovers. The British Press Association asked him if the 2026 World Cup is his last shot at glory for England. "I don't think so," he said.

"I think there's a perception when you get to your 30s that you're coming to an end, but for me, I'm performing at the highest level I've ever performed and feel as good as I've ever felt, so it's about taking in the moment.

HARRY KANE PHOTO: X

"I don't like to look too far ahead, and in my career I never have.

"The World Cup (in the US, Mexico, and Canada) is going to be exciting. In America, it will be an incredible occasion and ultimately it's about trying to win that, looking at where you are, where to improve and it will be no different in a couple of years."

Kane started playing at Ridgeway Rovers at age five and liked his statue.

"It's pretty special, to be honest, these are things I didn't think of when I was young. It all began here and it was the building blocks of my career. This is a great inspiration for the boys and girls who play."

—PTI

WOMEN'S ACT HOCKEY

India beat Japan 2-0 to face China in final

RAJGIR, 19 NOV

Defending champions India continued their unbeaten run and defeated Japan 2-0 to enter the final of the women's Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament here on Tuesday.

Vice-captain Navneet Kaur converted a penalty stroke in the 48th minute while Lalaremsiami struck from field play in the 56th minute for India, who had plenty of scoring chances including 13 penalty corners.

India will face China, whom they defeated in the league stages, in the final on Wednesday. Earlier, China beat Malaysia 3-1 in the first semifinal.

Malaysia will take on Japan in the third-fourth place match, while Korea finished fifth after beating Thailand 3-0 in the fifth-sixth place classification match.

The Indians continued their attacking game and put early pressure on the Japanese defense, just like the last league game.

The play was mostly inside the Japanese half as the Indian defence was hardly tested.

India's Lalremsiami celebrates win with teammate Navneet Kaur PHOTO: PTI

India had the first shot at the goal inside the initial five minutes. Skipper Salima Tete's attempt was thwarted by Japanese goalkeeper Yu Kudo.

The Indians repeatedly penetrated the Japanese citadel and in the process secured two penalty corners in a span of two minutes but Kudo was alert under the bar to deny Navneet Kaur and Deepika.

Three minutes into the second quarter, India secured three back-to-back penalty corners but failed to find the back of the net. It was raining penalty corners for the hosts as they got back-to-back set pieces in the 21st minute but Kudo produced a brilliant save with her fully-stretched right leg to deny Deepika again. In the 24th minute, India earned a penalty corner followed by another in the next minute but failed to get past Japanese goalkeeper Kudo, as they also lacked in execution. A minute after the change of ends, India secured two penalty corners but wasted both.

—PTI

Bumrah is 'cat burglar' for Brett Lee, India's 'X-factor' for Head

PERTH, 19 NOV

Dubbed as the bowler "impossible to face" by swashbuckling Australian batter Travis Head and a "cat burglar" by former tearaway pacer Brett Lee, Jasprit Bumrah's reputation precedes him.

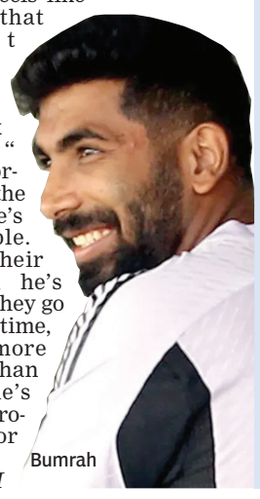
The India pacer, who is set to captain India in the first Test of the five-match series starting here Friday, has left both past and present Australian players in awe of his skill and threat. Not since the golden era of the West Indies in the 1970s has a touring pace bowler struck fear into the hearts of Australians as much as Bumrah, according to the local media here.

On his two previous Test tours of Australia, the 30-year-old Bumrah, who is set to captain India in the first Test of the five-match series here from Friday, took 32 wickets at an average of 21.25, including a match-winning 6/33 during the 2018 Boxing Day Test. Since the start of the 20th century, only two touring bowlers have taken more wickets in Australia at a lower average -- Richard Hadlee and Curtly Ambrose.

Head, Usman Khawaja, and Steven Smith all top-order batters who are set to face Bumrah in the marquee five-match series are unanimous about the pivotal role the Indian pace spearhead can play for India. "Impossible (to face). You try to feel like you're one step ahead, but it always feels like he's that next step," Head told 'Fox Cricket'. "

Any format of the game, he's incredible. He's their X-factor, he's the guy they go to every time, and more often than not, he's able to produce for them.

—PTI


Bumrah

Watson backs Smith

Former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson has expressed confidence in Steve Smith's abilities to bring the best version of him in the upcoming five-Test series against India starting on Friday in Perth.Smith, who struggled as an opener, will return to his usual No. 4 spot in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy after Nathan McSweeney was finalized as Usman Khawaja's opening partner for the red-ball format.After David Warner's retirement, Smith was elevated to the opening role - the move that didn't go well for the Australian team.

—PTI

Anupama stuns Zhang to enter CM second round

SHENZHEN, 19 NOV

India's Anupama Upadhyaya recorded a stunning three-game win over world number 15 American Beiwen Zhang to progress to the women's singles second round at the China Masters Super 750 tournament here on Tuesday.

The 19-year-old from Almora, ranked world number 50, showed great composure to outsmart Zhang 21-17 8-21 22-20 in a 48-minute contest. It was her first second-round appearance in a BWF Super 750 world tour event.

Anupama, who had won titles in Kazakhstan International challenge and Polish Open early in the year, will face Japan's Natsuki Nidaira in the next round. India's B Sumeeth Reddy and N Sikki Reddy also advanced to the mixed doubles second round but it was another heartbreaking defeat for Priyanshu Rajawat, who lost in the men's singles opening round.

Sumeeth and Sikki, the husband-wife duo, fought past the American pair of Presley Smith and Jennie Gai in a tense 63-minute encounter, winning 23-21, 17-21, 21-17.The Indian duo will now take on the top-seeded Chinese pair of Feng Yan Zhe and Huang Dong Ping in the next round.

However, the day proved disappointing for Rajawat and Aakarshi Kashyap.

World No. 34 Rajawat put up a valiant fight but ultimately went down 24-22, 13-21, 18-21 to World No. 32 Chico Aura Dwi Wardoyo in a grueling three-game contest.—PTI

Anupama Upadhyaya

PHOTO: PTI

India Padel Open: Top players to compete

NEW DELHI, 19 NOV

Several top players from around the world will compete in the inaugural India Padel Open, a part of the CUPRA FIP Tour, scheduled to take place in Greater Noida from November 21 to 24.

Padel is a racquet sport that combines elements of tennis and squash. It is played in doubles format on a smaller, enclosed court surrounded by walls. Players can hit the ball off these walls to keep it in play, adding a strategic dimension to the game.

The sport's smaller court and use of walls can make it easier for beginners to learn and enjoy, while the strategic elements and the ability to hit off the walls add depth and excitement for experienced players.

—PTI

Praggs to flag off Adani Ahmedabad Marathon

AHMEDABAD, 19 NOV

The 8th edition of the Adani Ahmedabad Marathon, a prestigious running event, will be flagged off by chess grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa on 24 November.

The marathon will start and end at the Sabarmati Riverfront Sports Park, managed and operated by Adani Sportsline. Praggnanandhaa will be joined by athlete-actor Saiyami Kher at the event.

The participating categories include the full marathon (42.195 km), half marathon (21.097 km), 10 km run, and 5 km run. The Adani Ahmedabad Marathon, accredited by the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races, underwent a course change for the first time in 2023, and this will be the second edition on a picturesque track along iconic locations like Gandhi Ashram, Atal Bridge, and Ellis Bridge.

Last year's event saw over 22,000 participants. As part of the "#Run4OurSoldiers" campaign, the marathon honors India's armed forces, with a significant portion of the proceeds dedicated to their welfare. Last year, over 2,500 defense personnel took part in the event.

—PTI

FEDEX CUP

PGA Tour approves reduction to 100 players

PARIS, 19 NOV

The PGA Tour policy board approved eligibility changes Monday that eliminate 25 cards through the FedEx Cup in the first reduction of jobs since the all-exempt tour began in 1983.

Starting in 2026, only the top 100 in the FedEx Cup are assured full status the following year.

The board voted on proposals from the 16-member Player Advisory Council aimed at giving everyone who earns a full PGA Tour card a chance to get into enough tournaments to have a fair chance at keeping their cards.

It also approved smaller field sizes a maximum of 144 players, down from 156 for tournaments on one course with ample daylight hours. Another change was eliminating the four restricted sponsor exemptions, allocating them to what amounts to the alternate list.

Open tournaments still get unrestricted sponsor exemptions (typically four) that they can give to whomever they want.

FedEx Cup PHOTO: X

With changes not taking effect until 2026, that makes next year even more cutthroat with more than 170 players who have cards trying to finish in the top 100.

"The PAC discussions were based on several guiding principles, including our belief that PGA Tour membership is the pinnacle of achievement in men's professional golf," said Adam Scott, a player director on the policy board who also serves on the competitions subcommittee of the PAC. "The changes approved today will provide equitable playing opportunities for new young talent to be showcased, and positively refine the playing experience for our members."

—PTI